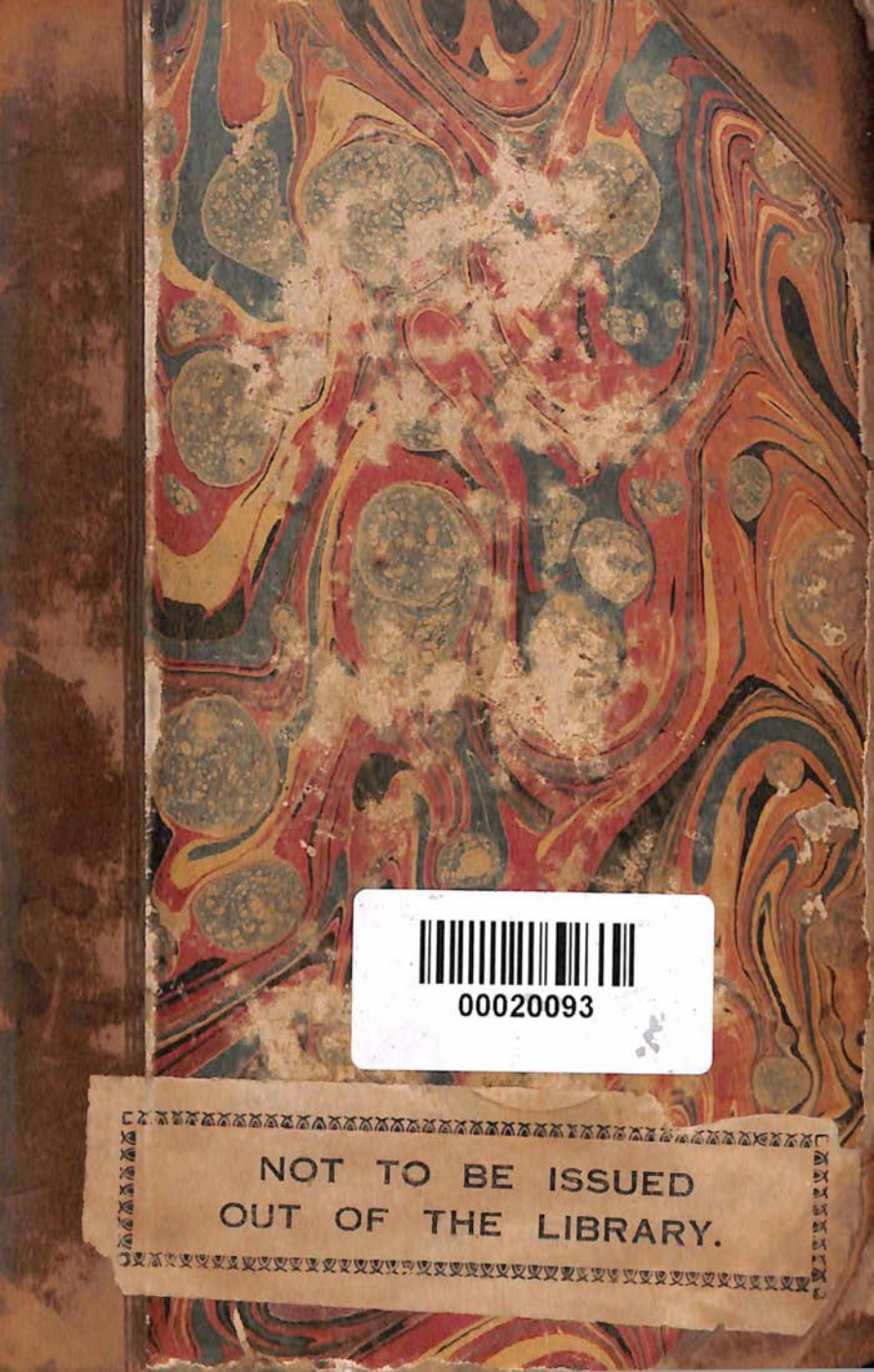
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Leigh Hunt.

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THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

LEIGH HUNT.

EDITED BY HIS ELDEST SON.

"What if some little payne the passage have,
That makes frayle flesh to feare the bitter wave?
Is not short payne well borne, that brings long ease,
And layes the soule to sleep in quiet grave?
Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please."

SPENSER'S "FAERIE QUEENE."

WITH A PORTRAIT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LONDON:
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NOTE.

The publication of these volumes has been delayed more than once by unexpected difficulties in procuring letters that were known to exist; and after all, there are deficiencies which I have been unable to supply. It is not that friends have been idle or dilatory; for in only a single instance was the application met with refusal—the representatives of an esteemed friend declining, on the ground that the communications addressed to him were so extremely private as to be unsuited for publication. All traces of correspondence with another eminent literary man had been destroyed. With these exceptions, I have to acknowledge nothing but extreme kindness, not from personal friends alone, but from those who are entire strangers to me, including several whose position and pressing duties might have been held to absolve them from any such claim. Some of the most interesting budgets of letters were only drawn forth from places in which they had reposed for years, by force of much

trouble and exertion. In spite of unremitting endeavours, it has been impossible to obtain any clue to others which must have been written to a few of my father's most eminent friends, and especially Lord Byron and John Keats. When the collection was first undertaken, Sir Percy Shelley, the son of the poet, was absent on a yachting expedition, and I had to await his return; a delay amply repaid by the help which he afforded me. In the *Letters from Italy*, already published by Mr. Moxon, were a few which formed an agreeable context for those which were in my hands; and my request for permission to reprint them was at once freely and courteously granted by the executors of the esteemed author-publisher. Many more contributions have arrived at a very late date, some indeed not until the work had been finally closed.

The most scrupulous care has been taken to observe the wishes of all who have contributed to the contents of the book. In one instance, the loan of papers was accompanied by a request that only extracts should be given, and that those extracts should, as far as possible, be confined to material strictly illustrating my father's life and character. The request was deemed necessary, on account of the vast amount of personal confidences which had been exchanged, and of circumstances affecting the correspondent and others which he felt himself bound to regard as strictly confidential, or, at all events, as not to be published with any knowledge or sanction on his

part. His wish has been observed to the very letter. In another instance the position was more embarrassing. Although I was personally unknown to Mr. Robert Browning, he met my request with generous cordiality, and held out hopes of furnishing some few letters that would have been of the greatest value. They have not come. The reason is but too well known to the public; and the impossibility of intruding upon Mr. Browning, even with so much as a question, has induced me to publish one or two letters, which were in my hands, without further consultation; although it is most probable that this portion of the book would have been materially improved by his corrections. My special thanks are due to Mr. Robert Bell, who has not only bestowed much trouble in searching for letters, but has, with the most painstaking kindness, edited his contributions himself, illustrating the text by explanatory notes. One who has turned aside from important duties to ransack stores of really ancient date is Lord Brougham. Another to show this kindly zeal was the Lord Chief Baron, who, in a private letter to myself, makes an admirable suggestion: "It would be a good custom to return letters to the members of the family of the writer instead of burning them. Frequently letters (in themselves possessing no interest) would be much prized by children and grandchildren as family memorials. Several times it has occurred to me to do so, and on every occasion I have given great pleasure."

The arrangement of the collection was unavoidably arbitrary. I had to deal with vast heaps of correspondence, much of it having only a transitory interest, while other sections were rendered unavailable by the absence of context. The difficulties of grouping were rather perplexing, and of several methods I had to choose only the least inconvenient. I have classed the letters mainly by the places from which they were written, and the plan has the advantage of distinctness, while it also happens to accord very nearly with the most marked stages in the life of the writer. The rule of selection has been that indicated by the friend whom I have mentioned—to choose those letters which best illustrated the life and character of the man, the vicissitudes which he underwent, and the qualities which sustained him; enabling him in a long career of troublous change and constant anxiety, to extract a large amount of happiness for himself, and to confer still more upon others. It was this stedfast fidelity to the principle of hopeful industry in cultivating the best influences of life that so especially endeared Leigh Hunt even to those who never saw him personally.

THORNTON HUNT.

THE

CORRESPONDENCE OF LEIGH HUNT.

EARLY LETTERS.

AMONG surviving stores of letters in the handwriting of LEIGH HUNT, the earliest do not go back beyond the year 1803, when he was in his nineteenth year. They are of a nature which would make any searcher amongst his papers regret that none of a still earlier date can be found, though perhaps some few may still turn up amongst the stores of relatives at a distance. It is possible that those young compositions may have been meagre and unstudied, like the school exercises which he describes the schoolmaster, Boyer, as throwing among the schoolboys for their sport; but even a memorandum, which marks out the general tenor of his thought at this period, makes one wish to learn more.

THE EARLIEST BOOKS AND COMPOSITIONS WHICH I CAN RECOLLECT TO HAVE READ AND WRITTEN.

BOOKS.—Milton's *Paradise Lost*, with cuts which I then thought beautiful; in thick duodecimo. This is the first book I remember.

Seven Champions of Christendom.

Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.*

A book called, I think, *Benignus*, or some such title, written by Mr. Pratt, which I took to school with me.

Fairy Tales, in quarto, with cuts, giving a story, among others, of an old queen who wished to exchange ages with a young village maiden.

A *Hamlet*, bound up by itself.

I do not remember Spenser so early as these; but at twelve years of age I wrote several hundred lines of a poem entitled the *Fairy Ring*, which was fully intended as a rival to the *Fairy Queen*. About the same time, also, I wrote a poem of about sixty lines in capricious Latin metre, or rather irregular Latin lines of no metre, but that sounded to my ear like English Pindarics. It was called *Thor*, and founded on the Gothic mythology. It arose somehow or other from the perusal of a piece in Dodsley's collection about a king of Hetruria.

Before this, when in Great Erasmus, the perusal of Thomson's *Winter* had called forth a rival attempt in rhyme, or rather imitation, which began thus—

> "Now from his airy magazines i' th' north
> Stern winter comes, and *calls his legions forth.*"

I remember also an elegy on the death of a good old aunt, who used to encourage me to keep my nails pared and to write fine letters, and whom, in lamenting her loss, I called *a nymph*. But the earliest endeavour to put together anything beyond a couplet or a ludicrous jingle was an ode in praise of the Duke of York's *victory* at Dunkirk, which I was afterwards excessively mortified to find had been a defeat. I compared him to Alexander, or rather dismissed Alexander with contempt in the exordium.

In his *Autobiography*, Leigh Hunt describes how he had remained unimpressed by the austere and spurious classicism of Boyer; who held up the *Irene* of Dr. Johnson as a model of poetry, and who certainly had not the art of conciliating his youthful charges. But it is evident that, as we so often find, the pedagogue's

teaching had exercised an influence upon the student after he left the school; and so Leigh Hunt himself says. The earliest volume of his published writing, issued in 1802, was written before the French Revolution had yet shaken up and reinvigorated the sources of thought all over Europe; and, it may be added, before the author himself was shaken up and invigorated by personal intercourse with the world. His book was a heap of imitations, "all but absolutely worthless," except as an indication of the faculties which enabled the reader so completely to master the literary ideas of others, always a large part of youthful studies; and as a measure of the subsequent change worked out by his own independent mind. The writer of *Juvenilia* found himself famous in his eighteenth year. His school associations, his personal qualities, his animated nature, attracted attention and conciliated liking wherever he went. He visited schoolfellows at Cambridge and Oxford, having himself been denied the expected advantage of a University life. For, in his boyhood he had an impediment in his speech, which was assumed to be incurable; though it seems to have rapidly diminished in his intercourse with the world, and to have left none but the very slightest traces. Some of his earliest letters relate to these University visits; and, naturally enough, they indicate at once the studied habit of thought which then belonged to the youth, and the vivacity of ideas that characterized him through life; while even then the independent mind may be seen breaking through the crust of habit. In a letter dated April 22nd, 1803, he recounts his journey down to Oxford:—

Friday, 22nd April, 1803.

My abode in the University has hitherto been pleasant; and, I hope, will be much more so when April chooses to give

us some of his smiles as well as tears; but the weather has really been extremely disagreeable, especially for my amusements on the water. Papendieck* and I went up the Isis yesterday in a sailing-boat, and we were so beaten about by the wind and washed by the water, had such hard labour with the sails, and got such terrible peltings from the hail, that I was never less disposed in my life to agree with the Greek poet in his *ariston men udor*, his good opinion of water, which you so well recollect. This morning, however, I again paid my devoirs to Mrs. Isis, and rowed by myself up the river Charwell, a small branch of the classic stream . . . If it was not for the weather, my highest wishes for pleasure would be exceeded in Oxford: here are swelling lawns, venerable shades in profusion, silver streams winding whereever you turn, and all the charms of rural magnificence: the prospect from the river, as you sit lazily under "the white sail gleaming to the sun" and look towards the city, is elegant and sublime beyond description: to the University there is a gradual ascent of meadows and cornfields intersected with various little tributary streams of the Isis; and the city itself, crowned with innumerable towers of the grandest architecture, rises over groves tufted with the richest verdure: conceive innumerable steeples—that of Westminster Abbey, for instance, of St. Paul's, and some of the best churches in London—starting out of Kensington Gardens and looking over the river Thames, and you have some Idea of the situation and aspect of Oxford. Add to this, the students of my friend's college (Trinity) are the best fellows in the world, men of sense and of good-nature; let me tell you also that they are very sober men, that we converse very gravely upon literary subjects, and that I am always in bed by eleven o'clock and up at eight. To show you what a temperate and calm-headed young man I am, you have here a list of my daily proceedings: at eight, as I just told you, I rise regularly, not only for my health, but for my breakfast, which is ready in exactly half

* An early friend, a surgeon.

an hour : after breakfast, Papendieck and myself have a duett on the harpsichord and flute, and after writing, or rather reading (for written I have not till now), for a short time, proceed to the boat-house, where we choose our vessel, and then glide up and down the Isis till three, when we go to Trinity Hall to dinner, at which, as you have been already informed, I eat most voraciously : from dinner to tea we play duetts ; and after tea sit down with three or four more to our before-mentioned sober conversation, till

"Morpheus locks us in his drowsy arms."

After all, there is something else besides good weather which is wanting to complete my felicity ; and I need not tell you, my dear girl, that this deficiency will always last, while a certain young lady is in Titchfield Street and I am in Trinity College. . . . . Tell Mrs. Hunter, that I remember two mothers in my prayers every night and morning, and Mr. H. that I will write him a letter the beginning of next week when I write you a second; to which gentleman—pshaw, I mean brother—remember me affectionately, as also to Sophy, and my sister Betsy, whom I always wish to have in my heart, but, heaven knows, never on my head.

This letter was addressed to Miss Marianne Kent, the young lady whose sparkling black eyes had entirely and finally captured the writer's affections. The engagement was formed at a very early age, when Leigh Hunt was about seventeen, and the lady about thirteen. One of his early companions, Mr. John Robertson, was much attached to a very young lady, Miss Elizabeth Kent, whose mother had been a court milliner. Mr. Robertson brought his young friend a periodical called the *Monthly Preceptor*, which was then open to the first attempts of youth in the exercise of original composition, and the child was urged to write for it. Even then she was held in considerable esteem by her family, for her intelligence; and her subsequent writing showed

that her natural qualities were not overrated. She afterwards said to a friend, that she might have been bold enough to try her pen in the *Monthly Preceptor*, but that she read there an article with which she was sure she could not compete, and she expressed an intense wish to see the writer. Mr. Robertson declared that she should do so, for he knew the man, with whom, in fact, he was just about to make an excursion on the coast. The two friends set out on a walk of many days' duration, and on their return Mr. Robertson took Leigh Hunt to the house of Mrs. Kent, to introduce him to his juvenile admirer. The visit resulted in an intimacy with the family. One night, the weather being violently stormy, and the visitor manifestly suffering from illness, he was induced to remain,—the next day developing a violent attack of what was called St. Anthony's fire; and he did not rise from his bed for many weeks. When he recovered he was unwilling to leave a family amongst whom he had been so tenderly nursed. The lady of the house allotted two rooms to his use, and he thus became her lodger.

It was during his residence with the Kent family that he formed an attachment, not to his youthful admirer, but to her elder sister, Marianne, and they were very soon engaged to each other. Even at that early period a characteristic on either side was displayed in considerable force. The lover could not be content unless he urged the young lady to cultivate her faculties somewhat in his own conscientious and scholastic spirit, though of course he did not enforce absolutely classic standards. And on her side, although her affections were manifestly pledged, the young lady could not conceal a disposition to keep a reserve of independence, and to resent dictations which tended to put a bent upon her own personal feelings and turn of

thought. The suitor betrayed some impatience at his too partial success: the young lady betrayed no less impatience at his pertinacity; and the engagement was rather unexpectedly though not suddenly broken off, about the end of September in the same year. Temporary as it was, the rupture is mentioned here because it had consequences which affected Leigh Hunt throughout the remainder of his life.

For a short time Leigh Hunt acted as a clerk to his eldest surviving brother, Stephen, an attorney. He had been asked by Miss Kent's mother, Mrs. Hunter,—the lady had recently been married again to the nephew and successor of Johnson, the well-known bookseller,—to consult his brother on some legal question. In stating the result of his inquiry, he began with a totally different subject; telling Mrs. Hunter that he enclosed a letter expressing his affection for her daughter, and asking permission to renew his addresses. Mrs. Hunter at once forwarded the letter in one of her own, characterized by thorough good sense and good feeling. "Hunt," she said, "is on the brink of again renewing his offer to you, but I have found means to prevent it till I knew your mind. He is entitled to every consideration from us: he must be prevented entirely from renewing them, unless he is likely to meet with success. I have latterly thought your opinions have been in his favour. I could say a great deal, but am too anxious for the consequences to venture to give the balance either way; but I expect your confidence, and that immediately. I am too ill and too busy to enlarge." Miss Kent's resentment had already vanished, and young Hunt resumed his position as her acknowledged suitor; and at the same time he resumed his industry as a writer of letters. The following, of uncertain date, may have been written in 1803, but more probably in 1804.

To Marianne.

[*Date*, 1803 *or* 1804.]

My dearest Marian,—I am very uncomfortable; I get up at five in the morning, say a word to nobody, curse my stars till eleven at night, and then creep into bed to curse my stars for to-morrow; and all this, because I love a little black-eyed girl of fifteen, whom nobody knows, with my whole heart and soul.

You must not suppose I love you a bit the better for being fifty miles out of my reach; that is, out of my reach in the day-time; for you must know that I travel at a pretty tolerable pace every night, and have held many a happy chat with you about twelve or one o'clock at midnight, though you may have forgotten it by this time.

"Oft by yon sad and solitary stream
Sweet visions gild the youthful poet's dream;
Calm as the slumbers in the roseate shade,
Unvarying Fancy clasps his absent maid,
Hangs on each charm that captivates the heart,
The smile, the glance too eloquent for art,
The whispers trembling as of love they tell,
And the smooth bosom's undulating swell;
Paints the bright prospect of approaching years,
And all Elysium opens to his prayers."

You see lovers can no more help being poets, than poets can help being lovers. You long to see Elliston: by the merest chance in the world, I saw him on Saturday night. I was going to say that Harry Johnstone was not fit to tie Elliston's neckcloth; but I have a respect for your favourites; besides, this would not be truth, as Harry is certainly an excellent, nay a fine actor in *particular* parts, such as require haughtiness of demeanour or represent the energy of resolution; but then Elliston is fine in everything. The pieces I saw (I was alone) were the *Mountaineers* and *Love Laughs at Locksmiths*, a farce attributed to Colman; and to his honour, for its humour is excellent and peculiar. In the drama, Elliston electrified the feelings of his audience in the part of a lover, who, for the loss of his mistress, whom he supposes to be

married to another by force, is seized with sudden starts and fits of melancholy madness; his bursts of passion are awful, and the sudden descent of anger into a wild and fixed melancholy is so pathetic, that if I had been in the pit, I could have jumped on the stage and wept with the sufferer. One time, I could almost have seen you give him a kiss; it was in a scene where he is madly struggling with a young Moor, who refuses him a passage through the mountains; he is just dashing the stranger to the ground, with all the brutal strength of a maniac, when the Moor's mistress (Mrs. Atkins ! ! ! !) rushes in to save her lover; at the first sight of her, the madman seems to have lost all his strength ; he drops his hands, as if suddenly overcome with faintness, and fixing a look of melancholy tenderness on her face, as if he recollected he himself had loved and would do anything for the other sex, he utters the mere word—"Woman!" but with such a look and in such a tone that—in short, he is a divinity! Ay, and then in the farce he performs a young intriguing officer most admirably; acts in the disguise of a Jew wonderfully; and, to crown all, sings a most excellent song:—by-the-by, his person is elegant and active, though sufficiently strong, and if he has not a face as regularly fine as H. Johnstone's, his features are strongly marked and capable of powerful variation: in fact,—but you must see him yourself, and judge for yourself, and if you don't admire him above all other admirables (that is, admirable *actors*) I shall—I don't know what I shan't do! Will you do me the favour—I beg pardon—Will you tell me, my dear girl, whether Mrs. Hunter is conscious that there is such a person as James Henry Leigh Hunt, or whether she is too sore with the lashes she has received to write a line of How-d'ye-do's to London Street? I have been told that this lady has been frightened with a most terrific dream; such a dream as will make a most excellent penny gilt-book of horribilities to frighten the nursery:—"As how, one dark night, a house in Little Titch was set on fire ; as how the cupola of Saint Paul his church, filled brimful out of the great river Thames, could quench not the roaring flames ;

how the beautiful bevy of sweet damsels, the Lady Bellortha, the Lady Vernonia, the Lady Cliftilla, and the Ladies Freemania, Tentinia, and the Hutchinsonquilla, virgins of ravishing shape and angelic deportment, escaped not, but were all seized and carried away in a sack made of the skins of nine Tartars, by a monstrous giant with a face of raw flesh covered with hair, terrible to behold upon! How the valorous Don Hunterrero, Knight of the Folio, was stuck through the fifth rib by a malicious enchanter, in the shape of a dolphin in boots, and how—" but I am afraid you'll never be able to get to bed after reading this horrible story. Tell Mrs. H. that all she needs is, in my humble opinion, a good husband at supper with her every evening, and all her best friends about her: in this case, too, I shall see you again, and I'll pay you prettily for running away from me, for you shall not stir from my side the whole evening when you return: tell Betsey, too, that she is a very malicious prophetess, and that if she comes to me again with such ill news as she gave me in her last epistle, I shall pray Heaven to cut at least two inches of plumpness from her round face, and at nineteen to give her a husband of ninety. If you are well and *have* been so at Brighton, you are every thing I could wish you. God bless you and yours! you see I can still pray for myself: Heaven knows that every blessing it bestows on you is a tenfold one bestowed on your—H.

[*Dated* 1803 *or* 1804.]

I need make no apology, I know, for the coarseness of this paper, because the sheet is so much larger than the fine letter-paper; but if there had been any of the latter in the house, I should certainly have preferred it, since I do not see any reason why, between the most familiar and affectionate, the little civilities of life should not be exercised as much as possible; or rather, I think, that that very familiarity and affection is the very reason why they should; and, therefore, I am always so delighted when I see a married couple, who are known to be fond of each other in private, behave with a polite attention to each other in public; and for the same

cause, it always gives me a grateful sensation when I receive a letter from you carefully and neatly written, like your last.

Bess and I spent a very pleasant evening on Friday at Mr. Button's, where we heard the celebrated Barthelemon play a few solos on the violin. Bess said she never liked the violin before: he brings a tone from it like the upper notes of a flageolet. This musical little antique is supposed to be five or six and seventy, and married the other day a vulgar girl of twenty-five: they had a little one, which died a few months ago, and the old gentleman told Mr. Button that he was obliged to stay at home the same evening, because Mrs. Barthelemon was *so* miserable. "And so," continued he, "I sat with her, and comforted her, and *played a game of cards* to amuse her." Mrs. Button is quite indignant at his marriage: I *ventured* to say that I thought a man with such feelings, as a great musician must have, might possess a more youthful soul than other old men. "Lord!" cries she, "the old fellow! The song says—

'Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together.'

And then again—

'Youth, I do adore thee;
Age, I do abhor thee!

Oh! I have no patience with the profligates!" Two young men sung a few songs with more science than feeling. We sat down to supper at eleven, and got home by *two*.

It must have been about this period that Leigh Hunt was placed by Mr. Addington in the War Office. Even then he showed that incapacity to measure time which was corrected only by great exertion at a later age. He could scarcely command leisure for breakfast, though he seldom reached office early. On one occasion he was to visit his friend, Charles Robertson, in Lincolnshire; and the young ladies rose early to make his breakfast before he went off, but he was too late for the coach. The next day he rose in the same

manner; he was again too late. But that night he slept at the Golden Cross, and managed to commence his journey on the third day. Yet a friend who knew him well justly remarked that "procrastination" was not the proper term for the habit; he did not "put off;" it was not entirely the enjoyment of the passing moment that made him defer exertion; it was rather that he became so completely absorbed in the immediate occupation of the moment, whatever it might be—whether it were conversation, music, study, or hard work—that he had no faculty for noting the lapse of time.

Official duties were varied by a constant series of letters to Titchfield Street, in the same strain. He was then living with his brother John, to whose family he frequently refers. Sometimes he writes to explain why the usual visits could not be paid; sometimes, to arrange for an evening at the theatre, to see the new comedy, *The School for Friends*, or Master Betty. On this subject he writes to Mrs. Hunter a highly characteristic explanation:—

To Mrs. Hunter.

28, *Brydges Street, Covent Garden,*
Wednesday Morning, October 1805.

I have often thought of writing to you, dear madam, on the subject of this letter; but the idea, either that my reasons were weak or that it was a thing in which you took no concern, has hitherto prevented me. It is possible you may have thought it strange that my perpetual opportunity of accommodating my acquaintances with admission to the theatres has not induced me to consult the little pleasures of my best friends. I will confess my weakness to you: something prevented my tendering this favour to Miss Kent, and, as I could not ask her, I could not find it in me to ask anybody else near her. This may have been wrong; it may seem like attaching a greater interest to her idea than

she herself might have wished me to exhibit; but it was the fear of giving her offence, or of seeming to solicit that by favours which I could not gain by myself. I believe there cannot be a more ardent or real love than that which I at this moment entertain for her; but that love has settled into a something which, as it were, throws me at a greater distance from her than ever. Unreturned as it is, its nourishment is the greatest of my enjoyments, as the nourishment of any other virtuous and rational sensation is to the mind. Whether it is my hopelessness that makes me afraid, or my pride that makes me ashamed, I do not exactly know, but I have wished to speak to her on the subject, and cannot. I sometimes think myself too old in her presence, and sometimes too much otherwise; in short, I feel that I love her more than ever, but I cannot petition as I used. If I could win her like a man, if I could rescue her from danger or distress, or if I could gain her heart by the reputation of an honourable name, I could attempt everything; but every man cannot win his mistress like a hero of romance.

What this letter asks of you is, that you will instruct me and, in short, do exactly as you think proper on this theatrical subject: there are no persons in the world to whose pleasures I would more joyfully minister in any little service I could show them than you and yours. I am afraid you will think I make much ado about nothing, but I confess I do not like you should owe more (if the word *owe* may be used in such a case) to any other person than to your very sincere servant,

LEIGH HUNT.

But frequently comes out the unceasing desire to draw forth the artistic qualities.

To MARIANNE.

Monday, 9th December, 1805.

. . . . You know me incapable of flattery, and will believe me when I say, that I was most agreeably surprised by your taste for the pencil, and hope you will cultivate it at

your leisure hours. Nothing so delightfully relieves the more fatiguing exercises of life than such a taste; and I know you will allow me to say, that even a tune on the flute, which is the effect of a sister art, may enliven the hour of sickness and of melancholy. These little accomplishments are falsely called useless by those who either cannot feel them, or who envy them in others: nothing in this world is useless which can dispel a single cloud from human life, or add a single smile to a human face. I dreamt last night that you copied me one of the prettiest flowers from the botanical work as a reward for some tunes I had been playing to you, and that I hung the flower up in my chamber, and presented you with some of my best verses on the occasion. . . . .

It was absolutely a dream; and where is the wonder that I dream of you? . . . . .

Leigh Hunt was already pursuing his Italian studies. He was not content with the common superficial way of getting at a foreign language, but searched out its niceties, and anxiously consulted living as well as printed authorities.

To Mr. Hunter.

Somers Town, Tuesday Eve, January 1805.

Dear Hunter,—I am much obliged to you for mentioning my rhymes to Mr. Damiani, and if I could have given you a call in St. Paul's Churchyard, would more exactly have described the nature of my request. It is not for the *poem* I would ask his assistance, but for an *Essay on Heroi-Comic Poetry* intended to introduce it, in which I have ventured to insert a sort of memoir and criticism on the *Rape of the Bucket* (La Secchia Rapita) of Tassoni, who was the inventor of this species of composition. I have examined, I believe, the best Italian critics who have mentioned this celebrated wit, and diligently perused to the best of my ability the poem itself, which has infinitely amused me; but as I greatly distrust my researches into a language, which, to say the most

of my powers, I understood but imperfectly, I should think myself favoured, if Mr. Damiani would look over my manuscript, and just touch with his pen any false criticism or conclusions into which my ignorance may have led me. I am now reading Boileau's *Lutrin* for the second time, after wading through it with the help of a dictionary, and execrating all the irregular verbs in the French language. Only conceive, after all this, that I have the impudence to say something of it in my essay! To my edition of the *Lutrin*, however, there are two or three epigrams subjoined, which I can read with perfect felicity; one of them, written upon a portrait of the author wretchedly engraved, will no doubt amuse you :—

"Du celèbre Boileau tu vois ici l'image:
'Quoi, c'est-là,' dirais-tu, 'ce critique achevé?
D'où vient ce noir chagrin qu'on lit sur son visage?'
'C'est de se voir si mal gravé.'"

Among these *epigrams*, however (though I cannot conceive how the devil it got there), there is a confounded enigma, which has gravelled not only your humble servant, but all his acquaintances. When I take it to the ladies, they look very knowing till they hear the last sentence, which utterly confounds them: perhaps it may entertain you for half an hour on a Sunday evening:

"Du repos des humains implacable ennemie
J'ai rendu mille amans envieux de mon sort;
Je me repais de sang, et je trouve *ma vie*
Dans les bras de celui *qui recherche ma mort*."

So, my friend Holt's play is damned at last: what the *Morning Chronicle* says is, however, perfectly just: it is the work of a gentleman and a man of wit, who is at present ignorant of the requisites necessary to produce stage effect. The satire is keen and probably too much so, as well as too serious: that composition must have intrinsic merit, the manuscript of which Sheridan, with all his indolence, took pleasure in filling with marginal notes and phrases of approbation. I consider it as an effectual attempt to revive the old

comedy, which perhaps it was wrong in a young author to endeavour, at a time when neither Wycherley nor Congreve can collect an audience. The party against him was very strong; all the modern play manufacturers, and their friends the editors of newspapers, whom the severity of his criticism in Bell's paper had made his personal enemies, came with a determination, as I very well know, to damn the piece. It will be published, however, on Saturday next, and I will send it you that you may judge for yourself of the vigour of its language and the excellence of its satire. What chagrins the author most is the ill-timed consolation of his acquaintances, who fancy they cannot speak to him without lamenting his mischance: I have been reminding him of the repartee of Dryden's, on being pestered with one of these condolers; on the night that one of his plays* was damned he was taking his melancholy departure from the theatre, when a coxcomb of an acquaintance accosted him in the street: "What, Dryden, my boy, upon my soul I feel for you! Can there be anything more shocking to a person's feelings than a damned play?" "Yes, sir," replied the poet, "a damned fool!"

I heartily thank you for Voltaire's *Sequel*. He is an author that perpetually delights me, and has the felicitous art of uniting profound philosophy with the most lively wit. I will return it you next week through the hands of Mr. Robertson. I enjoy my evenings immensely: the business of my office makes me return with double pleasure to my books, though I have been so bandied about these holidays, from dinner to dinner and tea-party to tea-party (you see of what consequence I am!) that it has wearied me out. How comes it that you do not tell me the name and goings-on of your little one? Do you think that I take no interest in his welfare, because I have never had the pleasure of seeing him? Pray make my best remembrances to Mrs. Hunter, and intreat her to give him a kiss for me; and when I get one of my own, I will give him ten for her. With a good wife and a good

* *The Wild Gallants*, which, by-the-by, if I recollect rightly, was a first performance.

fireside, you will, no doubt, enjoy the new-year as it ought to be enjoyed, so that I shall keep my good wishes for those who want them. Believe me, however, your affectionate friend and servant,

LEIGH HUNT.

To MARIANNE.

(Written during a journey to Lincolnshire.)

Gainsborough, Sunday, 23rd February, 1806.

MY DEAREST MARIAN,—Your letter relieved me from much anxiety, for I have had a violent return of my illness this last week, which as usual subjected me to melancholy in spite of myself. However, neither the palpitation was so alarming nor the vapours so powerful as they have been; and though the Gainsborough people were astonished at the alteration so suddenly made in my countenance, which was getting ruddy and cheerful, yet I am recovering very fast, and this morning took three hard gallops with Mr. Robertson in a lady's park near the town. I found out a way, the other evening, to get rid of my melancholy: I will tell you what it is presently. Mr. Robertson attributed my illness to too much exercise, but a medical man here tells me it is owing to the rainy weather, which has a peculiar effect in Lincolnshire from the general humidity of the atmosphere. This makes me leave Gainsborough with greater pleasure, which I shall do some days sooner than I expected. My brother John sent me a letter last night, begging that I would come to town as soon as possible, as the first number of the *Statesman* will be published on the 26th; so that I shall see you on Wednesday, most probably in the morning. The Earl of Moira has taken the paper under his immediate patronage, and it will no doubt have a large circulation in the Ministerial circles. Now for my cure of melancholy: my best plan is to think of you. So I sat down the other day; and if you turn over, you'll see an

Epistle to Miss Kent.

(*Written from Lincolnshire, in February*, 1806.)

Lives he, who, vex'd with dull, splenetic dreams,
Shall shut his eyes because the sunshine beams?
Or, when the plain with vernal beauty glows,
Shall curse his stars, and sigh for Lapland snows?
Just twice such madness on thy poet fell,
When on thy ling'ring lips he sigh'd farewell;
When first he wander'd from those radiant eyes
To wintry waters and ever-weeping skies!
Alas! his eyes but one blest region see—
He fled from pleasure, when he fled from thee.

Oft does my fancy to thy presence fly,
Smiles with thy smile, and dances with thine eye;
Or by thy side, through rich, embroider'd hues,
The shining needle's eager track pursues;
Or o'er thy fav'rite Homer mourns the chief
Who graced the warrior by the husband's grief;
Or in some twilight hour, ere curtains close
And busy tapers mock the day's repose,
What time the moon upon the lifted sight
Through whit'ning casements sheds a lover's light,—
Hears the accustom'd sighs thy bosom swell,
Pensive, not sad, for him who loves so well,—
For him who wander'd from thine arms to find
No joy but thinking what he left behind.

What charms thine image in my fancy wears,
Cheerful, and lovelier, from domestic cares!
Let vainer nymphs the public circles fill,
Divine their looks, their dress diviner still;
Let them from home as from the small-pox fly,
And never know a blush, but what they buy;
Let them believe, and thus for once be right—
Their worth, like colours, lives but in the light;
Let fops in crowds their every glance pursue,
And laugh at all they say,—with reason, too;
Be thine, sweet girl! the passion and the praise
To court the shade of calm, domestic days,
And by one fond, approving voice inspired,
From admiration steal to be admired.

Dear are the charms, that never long to roam
Beyond the peace, the little heav'n of home!
There in one gay, unspotted circle move
Love warm'd with ease, and ease refined by love;
There, on her noblest empire, reigns the fair,
Whose ev'ry smile her willing subjects share:
'Tis but a narrow reign, but there reside
A wife's best pleasure and a husband's pride.
'Tis but a narrow reign, but holds whate'er
To virtuous man and guardian Heaven is dear.

Ye joys of home! like distant music sweet,
Shall I once more your social welcome meet;
Breathe your blest air, retrace your happy ground,
And with an independent smile look round?
Be ready with your smiles, ye joys of home!
Soft on my fair one's presence will I come;
Thoughtful she sits, nor, though he fill her mind,
Hears the loved stranger stealing from behind:
Then for a moment will I linger there
To hear her sighs and view her pensive air;
Then kiss her cheek she turns with fond surprise!
Love spreads her arms and animates her eyes;
Words, smiles, and tears, in sudden transport start;
I clasp th' enraptured blessing to my heart.

I know you will think well of my rhymes, because they come from the heart of your faithful and affectionate

HENRY.

A MONSR. MONSR. HUNTER.

The French lady wrote to her husband, "*J'écris, parceque je n'ai rien à faire; je finis, parceque je n'ai rien à dire.*" I have, however, much better excuses: I have had time enough and much to say, but yet I have been able to write nothing. If you knew what it was to have a thumping heart and a jumping imagination, you would pity your affectionate friend,

L. H.

To MISS E. KENT.

What shall I say to my dear sister Bess? I can send her no letter, but I send her every good wish of her affectionate brother,

J. H. L. H.

To Marianne.

Gainsborough, Thursday, Feb. 1806.

Dearest Girl,—My journey to Doncaster is deferred till next week, so I sit down to write to you a day earlier than I intended, in order that you may have two letters instead of one this week, to make up for former deficiencies. A very heavy rain last night has made the snow vanish from the fields, which looked delightfully green this morning: I walked out to enjoy the lively air and the universal sunshine, and seated myself with a book on a gateway at the bottom of a little eminence covered with evergreens, a little way from Gainsborough. It seemed the return of spring: a flock of sheep were grazing before me, and cast up every now and then their inquiring visages, as much as to say, "What singular being is that so intent upon the mysterious thin substances he is turning over with his paws!"—The crows at intervals came wheeling with long cawings above my head, the herds lowed from the surrounding farms, the windmills whirled to the breeze, flinging their huge and rapid shadows over the fields, and the river Trent sparkled in the sun from east to west. A delightful serenity diffused itself through my heart: I worshipped the magnificence and the love of the God of Nature, and I thought of you: these two sensations always arise in my heart in the quiet of a rural landscape, and I have often considered it a proof of the purity and the reality of my affection for you, that it always feels most powerful in my religious moments. And it is very natural. Are you not the greatest blessing Heaven has bestowed upon me? Your image attends me not only in my rural rambles, not only in those healthful walks when, escaped from the clamour of streets and the glare of theatres, I am ready to exclaim with Cowper,

"God made the country, and man made the town."

It is present with me even in the bustle of life: it gives me a distaste to frivolous and riotous society; it excites me to improve myself in order to preserve your affection, and it

quenches the little flashes of caprice and impatience which disturb the repose of existence. If I feel my anger rising at trifles, it checks me instantaneously: it seems to say to me, "Why do you disturb yourself? Marian loves you: you deserve her love, and you ought to be above these little marks of a little mind." Such is the power of virtuous love. I am naturally a man of violent passions, but your affection has taught me to subdue them. Whenever you feel any little disquietudes or impatiences rising in your bosom, think of the happiness you bestow upon me, and real love will produce the same effects in you as it has produced in me. No reasoning person ought to marry who cannot say, "My love has made me better and more desirous of improvement than I have been!"

I am glad to hear nothing more has been said of my standing godfather to Mr. Robertson's child. I should undoubtedly excuse myself, and not only to him, but to any other acquaintance. To stand godfather is, I know, reckoned a very trifling ceremony: people ask it of others, either to gratify their own vanity or that of the person asked; they think nothing of the Heaven whom they are about to invoke. It is looked upon as a mere gossiping entertainment: a few child's squalls, a few mumbled amens, and a few mumbled cakes, and a few smirks accompanied by a few fees, and it is all over. The character and the peculiar faith of the promisers have nothing to do with it; the child's interest has nothing to do with it; the person most benefited is the parson, who is thinking all the time what sort of a present he shall get. Now, observe what I must do, should I undertake to be a godfather. I must come into the presence of God, a presence not to be slighted though in a private room, to worship him with a falsehood in my mouth, that is, to make him a profession of faith which I do not understand; I must then promise him to teach the child this very faith which I do not understand, and to guard her youth from evil ways; when it is very probable I shall never be with her or see her, and most likely, if I did see her, I should get my head broken by her relations for giving impertinent advice. Considered in itself, I think the

idea of christening a child and answering for what one cannot possibly foresee, a very ridiculous one; but when Heaven is called upon and the presence of the Deity invoked to witness it, it becomes a serious ceremony though it may be an erroneous one, and the invocation of the Deity is not to be sported with even on an erroneous occasion. I should go with respect into the society of any sect at worship—Mahometans, Christians, or Jews: I should feel a veneration for the cause of their worship, though not for the manner. My brother Stephen, an orthodox man, selected, as godfather and godmother for his son, a free-living and free-thinking old colonel who never spoke well of the church, and the colonel's daughter, his present wife, who never went there; but then, you know, the child's godfather was a colonel, and his godmother a colonel's daughter! My brother John, a Deist, was content to make his children virtuous; and leaving them to settle what it is impossible for him to settle for them, never christened them at all. I am afraid I tire your patience, my dear girl, upon this orthodox subject; but I say thus much to you under the hope that you yourself will be cautious how you enter into engagements of this sort. Let us do as much as possible for children at all times, and teach them the little we can; but let us not call Heaven to witness what we neither may be able nor willing to do for them.

I do not write, I acknowledge, either the best or the straightest hand in the world, but I endeavour to avoid blots and interpolations. I suppose, you guess by this preamble that I am going to find fault with your letters. I would not dare, however, to find fault were I not sure that you would receive my lectures cheerfully; you have no false shame to induce you to conceal or to deny your faults: quite the contrary; you think sometimes too much of them, for I know of none which you cannot easily remedy. Besides, my faithful and attentive affection would induce me to ask with confidence any little sacrifice of your time and your care; and as you have done so much for me in correcting the errors of my *head*, you will not feel very unpleasant when I venture to correct the errors of your *hand*. Now, cannot you sit down

on Sunday, my sweet girl, and write me a fair, even-minded, honest hand, unvexed with desperate blots, or skulking interlineations. Mind, I do not quarrel with the contents or with the subject: what you tell me of others amuses me, and what you tell me of myself delights me; it is merely the fashion of your lines: in short, as Saint Paul saith—"The *spirit* giveth life, but the *letter* killeth." I know you can do this easily, and I know also you will do it cheerfully, because it will give me pleasure.

Present my respects to Mrs. Hunter, and tell her, that I have found the tune, the Scotch tune, which pleased her so much between the acts in Douglas; it belongs to a song called "Tweedside," beginning

"What beauties does Flora disclose."

I will play it to her when I return. I shall write to Mr. Hunter next week, and will send you some poetry, as good I hope as "The Smile of Woman," for I feel my inspiration returning.

I still live like a lord, with fowls every other day, and pudding every day at dinner. My breakfast consists sometimes of cocoa, but generally of brown bread, milk and honey: this is repeated in the afternoon instead of tea, and for supper I manage to eat almost another dinner, consisting of meat, roasted potatoes, and a tart or small pie. Mr. Robertson's landlord is a soap-boiler; his manufactories are behind the house and overhang the river; he has a mind much above his situation in life, a good-tempered, sensible, neat wife, and four fine children: I am told he has been unfortunate formerly, but what then? His misfortunes have strengthened his understanding, and endeared his family to each other. He seems pleased with my society; he has a fondness for books: and for my part, I delight to see a man with hard hands and a working-day coat sitting at his ease and lifting himself above his occupation by the powers of conversation. Both he and his wife anticipate all my wants; which attention they pay me no doubt principally from their respect to Mr. Robert-

son, whom they consider a sensible and amiable young man; and so he is: there are not many men who unite these two qualifications; Mrs. Hunter is happy in possessing a husband, and I in possessing a brother, who unites them. It is astonishing to me that I could ever be melancholy, when I possess friends like these; and when, above all, I am able to tell my dearest Marian how infinitely she is beloved by her

HENRY.

Wednesday, 23rd July, 1806.

MY DEAREST MARIAN,—I have arrived, you see, safely and soundly at Barnes, and never felt in better health and spirits in my life: the country is beautiful, the skies are beautiful, Mrs. Oom's music is beautiful; and if a certain pair of black eyes were here, nothing would be wanting to the animation of the scene. The whole city seemed to have emptied itself on the Thames, when we took a boat at Blackfriars' Bridge, for there was not only a sailing-match in preparation, but a man was making an experiment of a machine to sustain persons in the water: the invention looked like a black metal bolster fastened round his body; he rode along the waves with perfect ease, and was followed with shouts and flags by an immense concourse of boats, which almost prevented our voyage: we got ahead of them at last, and pursued our way very pleasantly to Putney, where I left the boat to Papendieck's management, and performed the rest of my journey on foot, *for the evening was approaching, the air became rather cool, and I remembered the dear tender girl I had left behind me.* But when do I not remember her? It needs no injunction, on her part, to make me recollect my best happiness on earth.

Do not suppose for an instant, dearest girl, that I shall ever encounter the least danger on the water: depend upon it that I shall not enter a boat unless the water is perfectly smooth and the weather perfectly fine. How could you ever suppose that I should do what I had told you I would not do? If I were to promise you one thing and perform another, I should never be able to enjoy your society. No, no; the recollection

of a single one of your requesting smiles would overthrow all the requests and all the smiles of all the friends and ladies in the world. . . . .

Nobody can detest or avoid more than myself those abrupt conclusions of letters, when the writer, wishing to conceal the appearance of unwillingness or fatigue, talks about the *post just setting out*, or *of being called to dinner*, or to some particular business; but Papendieck has just come up to tell me that I have only a minute or two to finish my epistle, as the *dinner is coming on table.* I had no suspicion of this, as it is but half-past two, and at Mr. Oom's yesterday I did not dine till six. But I will take care and give you a long letter to-morrow; you know I delight in writing a great deal to you, as it is only another sort of conversation, though I hope to see by your answer that you do not intend to let me have *all the conversation to myself.* Pray make twenty bows for me to Mrs. Roger Hunter, and by all means let her know that I am not going to let anybody here wait dinner for me. My best respects wait on Mr. and Mrs. Hunter. My dear sister Bess, instead of sewing the *Statesmen* into the portfolio as usual, will have the kindness to give them to you to send down to me every day. I know you like to hear it repeated, or I was going to say that there was no need to tell you how sincerely I am your grateful and affectionate

HENRY.

Barnes Terrace, Thursday, 24th July, 1806.

My complaints seem to vanish like chaff, before the brisk country breezes; I have no longer any throat stiflings or rheumatism, and I go every morning to Mr. —— to drink warm milk, for he keeps a cow on purpose to improve his tea and his chocolate. Mrs. —— is as lively and as lovely as ever, but she ought to have married Apollo, or at least some spirited young fellow with a mind as cultivated as her own; she is a rose, buried in Russian snow. Yet the man is good-natured and hospitable, and seems very fond of his wife; but he is not glowing with youth and with fancy: he is not a

poet, he is not a painter, he is not a musician, in short, he ought not to have married ——, or I should rather say —— ought not to have married him; every man is in the right to get as good a wife as he can, but that is no reason why a woman should put up with an indifferent husband. I wonder we never heard, amidst all the celestial intrigues, of the loves of Venus and a Dutch tobacconist.

To Marianne.

(*Written during a journey to Margate.*)

Margate, 10*th July*, 1807.

. . . I forgot to tell you that I sometimes go to Garner's, one of those raffling and riotous libraries with which you must be well acquainted, at Brighton. There is a game there which is called One card, or Shilling loo; as many numbers are marked on a piece of paper as there are cards in a pack. Opposite these numbers you write what you please, either initials or sentences, or verses. I have engaged once or twice; my lines for to-night are these: you must know that the ladies are very apt to laugh when you get a blank—

> "Bad fortune or good, which you will, let me gain,
> A prize I'm determined to share:
> If I win, I have pain; if I lose, I obtain
> A smile from the lips of the fair."

Margate, 12*th July*, 1807.

. . . Will you excuse my hardly saying anything to you to-day, for in spite of all my boasting, a letter which I have just written to Titchfield to Mr. Hunter (as Mrs. Hunter seemed to wish me to write,) has brought back the pain and stiffness to my eyes, and I have got one of the worst pens as well as penknives that ever undid the meaning of a chandler's ledger.

Margate is still the same mere fashionable lump of chalk, but it serves for a sort of looking-glass of Brighton, and when I look upon the sea, I think we are both regarding the same object, or that the same waves are destined to bathe both you

and me. After the tepid bath, which is supposed to season strangers to Margate, it is not customary the next day, and therefore I shall not dip till to-morrow. Tell me, when you write, what time you go into the sea, or rather into the woolsack, for I do not see the vast benefit that can be derived from bathing in huge gowns of thick cloth.

I must tell you that while we were becalmed at Purfleet in the Thames, Mr. Stewart and myself went to visit one of his acquaintances, the Ordnance storekeeper there, and stopped in our way to eat currants at a cottage. The mistress of the fruit was a very pretty young woman, with an infant sleeping in its cradle by her side, in all the gaping chubbiness of his healthy age. She was remarkably genteel, and well informed for her situation; and as the sight of a baby always makes me think of you (there's a compliment for you), I talked to her about her children and her husband. She told me she read novels, or rather used to read them, most greedily.

I. Does your husband read novels?

She. No, sir, he never reads them at all; he does not like them, he is not fond of reading.

I. His dislike for novels is lucky.

She (*smiling*). Why, yes, sir, for then he thinks more of myself and his little ones.

I. Very good; but that is not the only reason why it is lucky.

She. True. I know your reason, sir; novels would make both, instead of one of us, lazy.

I. I must take a quart instead of a pint of your currants, &c. &c. &c.

God bless you, my dear love: read as much as you can with such a headache as yours, though I need not, and perhaps ought not, to tell you to do it after the kind promises you have made me. But don't mind the fruiterer's wife; reasons, the best in the world in one place, become the worst in another. Read novels, but let them be good ones, like *Cecilia* and *Camilla*, in which there is fancy, and wisdom, and humour, and morality all together. The hurt arising from them is

owing to want of judgment in the choice of the reader. Did you ever read *Hermsprong*, *Ned James*, or *Man as He Is?* You would like them much, particularly the first, which is said to be written by Lord Erskine.*

You see I hardly know when to leave off when once I am in your company. God bless you again and again. Your most affectionate

HENRY.

By a passage in a letter from Barron Field, beginning "My dearest Friend," and written from Hastings in August, 1807, it would seem that the young critic at that period wrote in *The Times;* but he never talked of it, and probably he only acted as a substitute for his friend Barnes, who sooner or later had a regular engagement on that paper, and, as everybody knows, became its managing editor. Field writes:—

TO LEIGH HUNT.

Hastings, 11th August, 1807.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—I am in ecstasies with your very attentive criticism in *The Times*, which I have only this moment seen; and cannot help sending you my best thanks for it. The latter part of it, on Mathews, I saw copied in the *Courier* a day or two ago, and knew from whence it came directly. Your simile of the clock and dial at the conclusion, however, I think imperfect, for there never was a clock without a dial, or that did not show its meaning after it had struck it. The allusion to water-works is a masterpiece. Pray let Mr. Walter have an article on the new piece of

* *Hermsprong* was really written by Bage, a country bookseller, who also wrote *Man as He Is*, and some other novels: easy, interesting, and clever illustrations of society as it was in those days, soon after the French Revolution, or as the clever bookseller wished it to be. To *Hermsprong* Leigh Hunt remained faithful through life, likening the hero of it to Shelley.

"Errors Excepted" *on Thursday evening.* Call on him after the play, and he will accommodate you. . . . .—Yours, in sure and certain hope of an answer by Thursday,

BARRON FIELD.

To a singular vigour of constitution Leigh Hunt united great nervous excitability, and there can be no doubt that the really hard fare at the Christ Hospital period of his days contributed materially to diminish his natural stamina. Although, therefore, he was throughout his life a temperate man, and retained his animation and hopefulness, and even his youthful appearance, to an unusually late age, he had very frequent and sometimes alarming attacks of illness. These were usually of the nature called "bilious," or were direct attacks upon the head, accompanied sometimes by head-ache, more frequently by giddiness, beating of the pulse, and a painful sense of pressure. Their ill effects were undoubtedly increased by his own nervous apprehensions respecting them, and also by his insatiable love of study. It was during one of these attacks that he paid a visit to a schoolfellow in Nottinghamshire.

TO MARIANNE.

Scaithing Moor, Nottinghamshire,
Wednesday Eve, 8 *o'clock.*

"So Harry Hunt came to Scaithing Moor,
To Scaithing Moor came he;
And when he came to merry Scaithing,
He swallowed some cho-co-la-tè."

Well, my dear Marianne, I am now 135 miles from you, and yet I do not find you are a jot further from my heart. My journey has been nothing but snow, sleet, and wind; but I am now sitting by a blazing fire in the snuggest inn I ever

saw; a little confusion of head is the only unpleasant sensation I feel, and I take up my pen to converse with you. Heaven bless the inventor of pens and postmen! I happened to meet in the coach, when I set off on Tuesday mornin——

Marianne (lifting up two bright astonished eyes). On Tuesday morning, sir? You must mean Monday morning, sir!

H. Madam, you must excuse me: I mean Tuesday morning.

M. Why, sir, you took leave of us on Monday morning.

H. Yes, madam, and the coach took leave of me.

M. Why, sir, the coach went off at eight?

H. (with much sorrow). Yes, madam.

M. You were too late, then, sir?

H. (with much sorrow). Yes, madam.

M. And lost half your fare?

H. Yes, madam.

M. A guinea and a half?

H. Yes, madam.

M. Well, sir, you have only paid a guinea and a half for a lesson of prudence.

H. True, madam. Some pay as much for a lesson on the fiddle. Which is the most useful of the two?

M. But, my dear sir, why didn't you return to Titchfield Street?

H. Why, my dear madam, there is something inexpressibly foolish in going twice on the same errand in vain. I took a place at the White Horse in Fetter Lane, so I slept in Gray's Inn, to be in time next morning.

M. Well, my dear Henry, all is well that ends well. I was afraid, at first, that you had been detained by a worse accident.

H. You are the dearest girl in the world, and, if you please, I'll go on with my story. I was going to tell you that I found a citizen and his wife in the coach, one of the best-natured couples in the world. These have been my

companions all the way. Last night the coach left us to sleep at Wandsford, and the citizen and I, being struck with each other, resolved to travel the rest of our journey in a post-chaise. Here we are, then, round a blazing fire: the citizen, a genteel, stout man, who gives me to understand that he has a house in Lombard Street and a country-seat at Blackheath, is lounging at the right side of the fire; his wife, a very pretty woman, a little younger than himself—that is, about six or seven and thirty, with a beautiful complexion and sparkling hazel eyes—sits right before the fire; and your humble servant is writing on the left corner before two silver candlesticks. The room is about the size of your drawing-room, the curtains down to the ground, a noble rug under my feet, the wind whistling outside the house to a moonlight sky, and all three of us much refreshed and gratified by a roasted barndoor fowl and a glass of Nottinghamshire ale, which has constituted our supper. I tell you all this, because I know that everything I have been about will interest you. Affection, like melancholy, magnifies trifles; but the magnifying of the one is like looking through a telescope at heavenly objects; that of the other, like enlarging monsters with a microscope.

My companions are going to Bawtry, which is at some little distance from Gainsborough: the latter town I shall reach to-morrow noon. They are great travellers, have made excursions over most parts of England, and understand the notions of postboys and inns—a knowledge very useful to me, who have given shillings when I find I should have given pence only. The citizen, however, is so liberal that I can hardly imagine sometimes that he can have a house in Lombard Street; he gives the postboys a shilling extra when they have had a tempestuous journey, and seems to have the knack of making others as generous as himself. Last night I slept at Wandsford, ate a basin of milk and bread for my supper—another in the morning for my breakfast—and had an excellent bed, after sitting an hour at an excellent fire: for this I had to pay tenpence—a bill so moderate that it

astonished even the veteran travellers. Some writer has said that the man who cannot enjoy himself in the snugness of an English inn will enjoy himself nowhere. I agree with him with all my soul. There is something delicious in jumping out of a chaise, throwing yourself into an arm-chair, and poking a huge fire. If I only had you by my side . . . . but I must not talk about that, or I shall be impatient to get back again.

Make my remembrances to Mr. Hunter, and beg him to go for me to Creighton's Circulating Library in Tavistock Street, and pay another month's subscription for me: it is about two or three shillings. If you or any of the family can find in the catalogue any book you might wish to read, you can procure it. No: upon second thoughts, I beg pardon, you cannot; for I have got the books, that should be exchanged, with me. The least I can do for Mr. Hunter in return will be to write to him. Tell Mrs. Hunter that I have neither palpitations nor risings, and that I send her my best regards for all her care of me. Request Bess not to speak so loudly another time, for I heard what she said of me last night at ten o'clock: I hope sincerely that your heigh-hos! and her oh! ohs! are both gone. I don't care whether Anne snores or no, for I do not hear the winds at night, so I have some hopes her nightly melodies will not reach me. I will not ask you to write to me immediately, for two reasons: in the first place, you had reason to expect a letter from me before this, but I arrived at Wandsford last night at twelve terribly fatigued, and hardly had time to swallow my breakfast there this morning; secondly, I know you do not want asking. Pray let me know how Mrs. Robertson is, with her pretty little miniature of a girl. Good God! how ought we not to love woman, who suffers so much for our being and our happiness! I hope there will never be a moment of your life which will not be a witness to the assiduity and the tenderness of your affectionate and grateful

J. Henry L. Hunt.

Harborough, in Leicestershire,
Saturday, 11th June, 1808.

My dearest Girl,—As I go the latter half of my journey in a gig, I am obliged to travel more leisurely than I did at first, and shall not reach Nottingham till to-morrow evening. I have therefore sat down to write you from this place, in order that you may have a letter on Monday. I have made but poor work of it hitherto. All yesterday I was jammed up in a hot coach with a silent farmer, a sleepy, lisping young man, and a reverend wigsby of the usual dimensions, who railed against the Unitarians, and, what was worse, gave me no room for my legs. These three youths soon went to sleep, and, I must own, I had no snoring; but the parson, by way of caution against cold, had almost entirely pulled up both coach-windows; my legs felt as they were in the stocks; and his huge beaver, as he nodded, not only played up and down before my face, in a manner that almost made me laugh, but tumbled off upon me every now and then, so that I expected his wig to follow every instant. However, I waked him with much civility to return him his hat, and then he used to start, and grin, and snore, and smile at me, I suppose, by way of apology. I longed to have all their faces in a vice, as usual. Once, I fondly imagined, he was going to be polite, for he made me change sides with him, and I looked upon this as no small generosity, as he was on the best seat; but lo! when I altered my situation, I found the su ncoming full upon my face. Nothing could have been better done. Oh, Mr. Parson! Well, we got into Nottingham about two in the morning, and then the sleepy youth and myself, who stopped there, were obliged to knock up a miserable inn for beds. The landlord showed us two rooms, one with a single bed in it, and the other with two beds, one of which was already occupied by two rustics. It was evident that either the sleepy youth or myself must have the double-bedded garret; but as he was a polite youth, he began to abuse the landlord for offering such a room to gentlemen, so that I imagined he was going to insist that I should have the single

bed; but while he was abusing, he had walked into the better apartment, set down his portmanteau, and begun to walk fretfully about. I saw what he was waiting for under pretence of abusing the landlord; and so I put him out of his misery by going immediately into the other room. So it is my fate to be outwitted by parsons; for the sleepy youth, it seems, is intended for the Church. I could not help smiling to think how finely I could smoke all this kind of thing, and, at the same time, reasonably, other men might smoke me, who so easily manage to get the worst of it. Be that as it may, the two rustics jumped up, when I entered, as if I had been a thief; but as good fortune would have it, it was time for them to depart, which they did to my infinite satisfaction. I bolted the door, was in bed in an instant, and forgot all the parsons in the world, nay, forgot all the world but one, whom I need not mention, and woke at eight o'clock in the full sunshine. This sunshine, however, was a little too hot, and a little too short. Mr. Payne's gig, with an excellent umbrella, great-coat, and overalls, met me at Northampton, and I arrived here in it, after a heavy drive through a heavy rain. Nevertheless, Miss Church sends you her love, and so she does Betsey, not to mention best respects to Mr. and Mrs. Hunter.

Nottingham, Monday, 20th, 1808.

My dearest Love, — I have just arrived from a village about twelve miles from hence, in Sherwood Forest, where I went yesterday morning, and slept last night. My visit was to a friend of Mr. Payne, who went with me. We had a very pleasant ride on horseback, both there and back. Very few of the forest trees are remaining, though Sherwood once extended several miles on each side of Nottingham. The inhabitants still talk of Robin Hood to strangers, and at a public-house not far from the town they pretend to show his cap and sword. The astonished beholders of course exclaim, "Very odd that it should be Robin Hood's cap," and so forth, and then they call for a pint of porter. It is a pity that there

is no relic of his mistress Marian, or rather it is a wonder, considering the invention of relic-finders. Were I to set up an inn here, I would certainly produce a lock of Marian's hair, and who should tell me it was not genuine? It is amusing to think how the world neglect much greater men than Robin, and how they value their most paltry memorials; and yet it shows the happy tendency of every trifle to keep up the reputation of great men. Thus the warrior, who is ungratefully used by his country, may obtain his reward after death by his cap or his sword; a poet may be immortalised among the vulgar by the chair in which he used to write; and the beautiful Mary Stuart triumph over her rival Elizabeth by the mere force of a miniature. Sometimes, indeed, this deification of kickshaws may be abused: the Roman Catholics have five or six legs, *original* legs, of the same saint, in five or six different places, so that either five of the claimants tell us a story, or the saint must have been a monster: they are also a little too apt to suppose every tombstone they dig up in Italy to have been a saint's or a martyr's, and they deify the names they find upon them, which for aught we know may have belonged to overseers of the road, or some of the greatest scoundrels in ancient Rome, or perhaps even to the persecutors of the primitive Christians. (Pray excuse the blot I have just made.) In our own country we have a scandalous instance of the perversion of fanciful honours and relics. I mean the exhibition in Westminster Abbey of a cap said to belong to General Monk, who restored Charles II., you know. In the first place, it is a mere exaction upon those who have already paid to see the curiosities; for the fellow who shows them, after handing it about, tells you that it is a custom with all *ladies and gentlemen* to put something in General Monk's cap; and secondly, this famous general was really a man of neither talents nor virtue, though the vulgar who crowd to see the show are led to imagine that he possessed both in an extraordinary degree: for what must he have been whose mere cap possesses so lucrative a virtue? These meannesses, and in fact the whole paltry pieces of wax-work, ought to be

abolished by the clergy of the Abbey.—But I must not write you an essay on relics instead of a letter.

I gave you, too, an abusive account of Nottingham, and thus (for I had seen nothing of it but the narrow streets through which I first came) you may be enabled to judge of those six weeks' and summer tourists who write accounts of towns and cities through which they have rattled along in post-chaises. A traveller who happened to touch on the confines of Sweden in this manner, caught a glimpse of a man and woman walking, one of whom had a hump-back and the other red hair; so the story says that he made this judicious memorandum:—"N.B. All the women in Sweden are carroty-headed, and all the men hump-backed."

In the Garden, Hermitage, Nottingham,
Saturday noon, 25th June, 1808.

My dearest Love,—The Hermitage ink is very bad, but perhaps it will get brighter as it comes nearer you. You see I am writing to you from the grotto I mentioned in the Quaker's garden. It is more of a hermitage than a grotto, for it wants the proper quantity of shell, spars, and other grottoical ornaments. The situation is truly delightful. Fancy to yourself about one hundred gardens, enclosed on two sides by the rock, with the castle overlooking them from the east rock, the grottos looking down on them from the north, the meadows and distant hills on the south and west, and the river Leen running at the foot of them, and you will have some idea of my situation. I would try to draw it for you, but I've grown bashful since you have become a sculptress. The retreat in which I am scribbling consists of two rooms, one for parlour, and one for kitchen; they are both almost entirely rock, with a little wainscoting just at the middle of the sides. In the kitchen are the usual nicknacks of a tea equipage, and a little recess for a closet, containing garden tools. Before the door are flowers in pot and parterre, and a most delicious view far over the garden and river. I want nothing but a long beard and a crucifix to be a complete

hermit. I hear no sounds but the birds, the long hum of the bee, and every now and then a mower whetting his scythe. A plague upon those unromantic beetles and earthworms, for I long to throw myself amidst all the flowers. If you look in Milton's "Allegro," at the lines about "Strait mine eye hath caught new pleasure," &c., you will see a perfect picture of this poetical retreat. Hermits might have been very comfortable for aught I know, but I am persuaded there is no such thing, after all, as a perfect enjoyment of solitude, for the more delicious the solitude the more one wants a companion. You know what sort of a companion, and you know whom, too, for me. I know that if you were with me just now, I could forget London entirely, but I cannot manage to forget it while I am alone. I hear somebody knocking: I take up a rose, and what do you think for?—why to clean my pen. There's realization of fancy for you. However, I must own that it was already plucked off, and lying on the table.

Sunday Morning, 8 *o'clock.*

I was interrupted yesterday by Mr. Payne, who lounged with me till dinner. By-the-by, I forgot to tell you about some curious excavations in the Castle rock, which the common people here call papish holes. They are in general choked up near the mouth; but we are told that they run in mazes underneath the Castle, for the use, no doubt, of the soldiery, the Castle servants, and the Castle intriguers. The subterranean entrance is still shown, through which they went to surprise that scoundrel Queen Isabella, with her gallant Mortimer. You know her very well from Rapin. I call an infamous female like her a scoundrel, because she no longer deserves even the bad titles of her sex. I visited the manufacturers in the evening for the third time, and now I believe I have seen everything about the town of Nottingham. I have also become a great physician since you saw me last. Let Mrs. Hunter take care of her throne. I have accompanied Dr. Clarke to all kinds of patients; and by this method I have been enabled to see all ranks of inhabitants, from the ruddy

country rector, who has headaches from fulness of blood, down to the pale, laborious weaver in his squalid retreat of dirt and noise, who has headaches because he has no blood at all. I have seen in the lower classes the baleful effects of opium, which the women are constantly taking, and which, with the help of Godfrey's cordial, destroys the rising generation of weavers. Lastly, I have been studying vaccine inoculation, which has now become a political question; I have witnessed its progressive effects upon different children, and I have seen recorded in the books of the infirmary, that the small-pox has come into the town four times within these years, and has been as constantly prevented from spreading by the instant inoculation of every infant round the spot where it was found. The doctor is determined, he says, not to let the editor of the *Examiner* go, without doing himself the honour of contributing his atom towards the said editor's general knowledge. Hem! Accordingly he did himself the honour, the other evening, to galvanise the editor's temple, which was a very courteous hospitality to the editor, who felt as if he had been shot through the head. Also he showed him a lady's heart, which rather staggered the editor's belief that that interesting object could be the seat of love. In short, to close this amiable subject, he introduced the said editor to a murderer! Horrible vision! But do not be alarmed. The murderer, who was once, as the song says,

"A gay dragoon,
With his long sword, saddle, bridle,"

killed a man sometime ago at Leicester, and is now a very harmless personage in the shape of a skeleton. However, when the doctor galvanised me the other night, he put out the candles in his room; and there I sat in the dark, awfully enough, with a man before me who was creating strange fire, and a murderer standing behind me in a little closet. I thought of the skeleton in that facetious romance I read just before I came away, who was seen sitting and chattering with a monk, like two bricklayers over a pint of beer.

Wednesday Evening, 19*th October*, 1808.

Mr. Whitaker has set a new song of mine with his usual taste and feeling, and here are the words for you, before anybody else has seen them, except the Buttons. I do not know whether you ever heard an Eolian harp, at least a good one. If you have, you must have been delighted, I know. The wind is the musician, you know; and as it swells over the strings, fetches out those beautifully wild chords, which are like nothing upon earth, as an Irishman would say, but the voices of angels. The swellings, and the falls, and the continued tremblings, in a still hour at night, are like a soul itself composed of sound; so I have written a comparison between

LOVE AND THE EOLIAN HARP.

Let me not waste my sighs away,
Like gales that heed not where they play,
From flower to flower, from stone to stone,
And never sure but to be gone;
But let them find some thrilling heart
That, like the charm'd Eolian lyre,
Shall in responsive music start
With all its chords on fire!
Such, such should be
Love's harmony!

Art cannot wake the wondrous sound,
In damps 'tis dull, in storms 'tis drown'd;
But long and gradual be the sighs,
And long 'twill vibrate ere it dies;
And Heaven's own hand shall seem to stray
Through all its fibres of delight,
Heard seldom in the busy day,
But oh, divine at night!
Such, such should be
Love's harmony!

There, Miss Kent; I need not tell you to put this letter under your pillow.

My next song will be upon the subject of eyes: you know whose. Indeed all my amatory effusions are upon one person,

and in that respect they not only differ with, but excel all the song-writers of the day, who are indeed no better than elegant vagabonds after all, they are so perpetually roaming from one girl to another. I have neither sufficient grace, nor sufficient gracelessness, to be always varying my attitudes and my pursuits in this manner. I am for unity in love, you know, as well as in religion, and am determined that my goddess shall not consist, like Diana, of three different persons as well as names. So now you have my love-creed for the thousandth time.

Monday, 14th November, 1808.

I have been looking over your collection of the *Examiner*, and have found one or two wanting, which I will supply before the year's out, as it would be a pity to spoil the set, for they are very rare, I assure you. One or two have been lent, I believe; and people who borrow it may not conjecture that four or five or six shillings are sometimes given for one of them. The paper gets on gloriously indeed: our regular sale is now two thousand two hundred, and by Christmas, or a few weeks after, I have little doubt we shall be three; and what is best of all, we shall now keep it to ourselves. My brother told me the other day that he had no doubt but we should be getting eight or ten guineas *apiece* every week in a year's time: now eight or ten guineas a week, with my hundred a-year from the War Office (for I rose ten pounds the other day), will be a tolerable income for a man to *begin* housekeeping with. If it were but six guineas apiece at first (for the paper will increase you know), it would do pretty well for us; don't you think so, Marian? Pray tell me what you think of this; for though I like to talk of money matters very little with anybody, and still less, I think, with you (that is, I mean, with regard to ——, as Mr. Dyer says, or ——, but you understand me), yet we must talk of them some day, you know. I can anticipate what your love might prompt you to say—that we could live on little—but I have seen so much of the irritabilities, or rather the miseries arising from want

of a *suitable* income, and the best woman of her time was so worried, and finally worn out with the early negligence of others in this respect, that if ever I was determined in anything, it is to be perfectly clear of the world, and ready to meet the exigencies of a married life before I do marry, for I will not see a wife, who loves me and is the comfort of my existence, afraid to speak to me of money matters; she shall never tremble to hear a knock at the door, or to meet a quarter-day; she will tremble, I hope, with nothing but love and joy in the arms of her husband.

Thursday, 17th November, 1808.

. . . . Louis XIV. was like the Prince of Wales, inasmuch as he was fond of pleasure; but his ambition rendered him at once a better and a worse man than the prince, for it made him fonder of literature and the arts, which he knew would immortalise him, and it plunged him into a hundred useless wars, which the prince has never been able to undertake, and, probably, never would have undertaken, as he is so grossly indolent, for I do not think his virtues would preserve him from any error. In short, if the vices of Louis had greater opportunity to extend themselves than those of the prince, the Frenchman was, nevertheless, more sensible, more tasteful, more refined in his pleasures, more like a prince. He was more like the Emperor Augustus, except that he became a religious bigot in his old age—the common end of many a vicious man who is disappointed. My two favourite princes are Henry IV. of France and our own Alfred; the one, though he was a man of gallantry, which is to be pardoned, in a great measure, in a Frenchman of his time, was never depraved, never lost the goodness of his heart, and he was a perfect hero of chivalry, as well as a philosopher, in adversity: the other is the most perfect character in the list of monarchs of any age or country, a man who has come down to posterity without a single vice;—a warrior, a legislator, a poet, a musician, a philosopher—a mixture of every-

thing great and small that renders us dignified, wise, or accomplished: a combination, indeed,

> "Where ev'ry god did seem to set his seal
> To give the world assurance of a man."

You see I must have recourse to Shakspeare. Nobody but such a writer can describe such a king.

Dr. Knighton's brother-in-law, Captain Seymour, has performed a very noble exploit, which you will see, of course, in the *Examiner*. With a vessel of thirty-six guns he has captured a French frigate of forty-four, after some desperate fighting. The two ships got hooked together, and the muzzles of the enemy's guns reached through the English portholes. The French fought magnificently; out of a hundred marines, for instance, only fourteen survived, and their deck presented the appearance of a charnel-house; but if the French fought so, how must the English have fought, who were their conquerors? But I will not talk long to you on a subject like this. However we may rejoice at the successes of our country, war is at all times unreasonable to our judgments and shocking to our hearts.

For some years Leigh Hunt had been practising his pen in the public journals. His brother John, with whom he resided for a time, was a printer, and they had already endeavoured to unite their forces. John had sought to establish the paper already mentioned, the *Statesman*. It promised to have a high patronage, for mention is made that a footman had appeared at the office especially to order it for her Majesty; but it was relinquished, apparently through some want of perseverance in the capitalists. Early in 1808 the two brothers set up the *Examiner*, the main objects of which were, as the editor says in his *Autobiography*, "to assist in producing reform in Parliament, liberality of opinion in general (especially

freedom from superstition), and a fusion of literary taste into all subjects whatsoever. It began with being of no party; but reform soon gave it one. It disclaimed all knowledge of statistics; and the rest of its politics were rather a sentiment, and a matter of general training, than founded on any particular political reflection. It possessed the benefit, however, of a good deal of reading. It never wanted examples out of history and biography, or a kind of adornment from the spirit of literature; and it gradually drew to its perusal many intelligent persons of both sexes, who would, perhaps, never have attended to politics under any other circumstances. The *Examiner* was always quoting against them the Alfreds and Antoninuses of old. The Constitution, with its King, Lords, and Commons, was its incessant watchword."

The new paper was started when the Prince Regent, surrounded by persons who cultivated his foibles, was acquiring a constant increase of unpopularity; Bonaparte was at the height of his power, and leading statesmen were still, with more or less impulse interrupted by fits of despondency, labouring to restore the genuine spirit of the British Constitution. In his own paper, Leigh Hunt carried on the same spirit of criticism which had gained him distinction in other journals, especially in the *News;* and the *Examiner* very rapidly advanced to the foremost rank which it ultimately attained. During the year 1808, Leigh Hunt had frequently discussed the propriety of his retirement from the War Office, not only because his new occupation interfered with his duties, but because he desired to secure that absolute political independence which he persevered in maintaining throughout his life. His motives were succinctly explained in his letter of resignation.

To the Right Hon. Secretary-at-War.

War Office, Mr. Stuart's Department,
Monday, 26th December, 1808.

Sir,—An employment which I pursue in my extra hours, and which demands a greater duty to the public than any I can perform in the War Office, induces me to retire from a situation in which a sound freedom of thinking and speaking is liable to mistrust and misrepresentation; and I do hereby accordingly resign my situation as clerk in the War Office into the hands of the Secretary-at-War.

In this proceeding, sir, you will do me the justice to believe, that my motives are exactly as I describe them, and that every petty consideration is incompatible with their purity and public ends.—I beg leave to subscribe myself, sir, your very obedient servant,

Leigh Hunt.

The independence of the *Examiner* soon drew upon it the hostility of the Government, which in those days, to its own serious detriment, commanded a ready machinery of castigation. The *Examiner* was prosecuted many times; but the official hostility did but secure for the paper the earnest sympathy and support of a continually increasing number amongst the very *élite* of the Liberal party. Here is a letter found amongst Leigh Hunt's papers, from a writer who had already written on the 19th of October, 1808, to say that he had taken an active part in distributing the prospectus of the paper:—

29th December, 1808.

Sir,—I am at a loss whether to sympathise with you in the way of congratulation or of condolence, on the subject of your impending prosecution. As a proof of what to your

readers needed no proving—your energy, it will undoubtedly bring you earlier to that pre-eminent celebrity which I have sanguinely anticipated for you, and by all my little efforts laboured to promote. This, by giving a wider diffusion to your opinions, out of evil may educe good.

But, then, if such should be its issue,—

"Trans Tiberim cubatis, prope Cæsaris hortos,"

is a melancholy reply to any one inquiring your lodgings. The abode itself, I fear, is not perfectly Elysian, though it involves, for a time at least, a sort of civil extinction. "And in that sleep of death"—not that I am much afraid of your visions—they will, I am sure, be those of a scholar, and I doubt not those of a patriot. Under existing circumstances, and with the present administration, the safest, if not the best, employment of the latter character is to dream.

May I beg to be favoured henceforth with your Monday edition, which will leave out nothing material, I trust, of its elder brother's contents. I shall be obliged to you likewise for the title-page, preface, &c., as *I* shall assuredly bind you up, whatever the law may do.—Very truly yours,

FRS. WRANGHAM.

Mr. Fawkes has lately, I believe, become one of your subscribers.

Invitations to other employments came in from all quarters. I find a very courteous letter dated "32, Fleet Street, March 31st, 1809," especially inviting a general review of the state of the drama for a periodical publication. The letter is signed, "Much your admirer and friend, John Murray." The invitation was to write for the *Quarterly Review*. The subject was unpolitical, and, unquestionably, if Leigh Hunt had then acquired the thoroughly catholic spirit which he ultimately developed, he might have accepted

the invitation, and might, we are almost inclined to say now, have done no small service in anticipating the work of those who afterwards Liberalised the Conservative party. But he had not then had the experience of half a century; and, we may add, he had not then profited by the beneficial reactions of the genial spirit which he himself materially contributed to throw into political warfare. Another letter from "A reader and admirer of your *Examiner*" asked his permission to use the words of the beautiful song—

"Throw the gaudy roses from thee."

This letter is signed "William Horsley."

Leigh Hunt was married on the 3rd of July, 1809. The marriage was to have been somewhat sooner—on the 18th of June—and on a Monday instead of Sunday, suggested by the bride's mother for some special reasons of the greater privacy. The marriage, however, took place at a later date, for there was an obstacle in the way. A licence was to have been procured, but Miss Kent was not twenty-one years of age; and although she wanted but three months of her majority, and the bridegroom was urged to get over the difficulty by consenting to speak of her as being already of age, he refused. This occasioned some change in the date; and in the letter which he supposed to be the last before their union—one arranging for the day and the licence—he says: "In the midst of the SERIOUS *happiness* I feel on the occasion, the bustle about proctors, and licences, and rings, still strikes me as something approaching to the frivolous; but with regard to the clergyman, I would certainly—and I am sure you would—prefer a gentlemanly, reasonable, and sensible man for so sacred an office, to anybody who comes—perhaps, a careless reader, or frivolous, or

drunken. As to my brother, I feel so uneasy under deception of any kind, especially towards him, that I think it better—and so does your mother and Mr. Hunter—to tell him the whole affair at once; and as my sister has been invited into the country by Mrs. Whiting, and will certainly go there, we will try if we cannot *keep* her there beyond the week; indeed, she has been invited for a month, though her active little soul does not like to be unemployed, or at least away from the bustle, so long."

Some time after his marriage, the young writer suffered severely from a fresh attack of illness, induced in some small degree, probably, by an excessive spareness of diet which he adopted, partly from a blind belief in the virtues of temperance under every aspect. It was in obedience to medical advice that he paid a visit in the earliest days of January to schoolfellows at Cambridge and Oxford.

To Marianne.

Trinity College, Cambridge,
Friday, 4th January, 1811.

Marianna mia,—I arrived here at a little after five last night, with feet as cold as ice, but very comfortable in other respects, in spite of a miserable, indulged infant who pestered us with its noise for upwards of thirty miles. The remaining part of the evening I devoted to Scholefield's fire-side and to warming my feet, and at eleven went to bed in a snug little room directly under his own, and on a *first* floor. This morning I have been writing my theatrical, so that I have seen hardly anything of Cambridge, except Trinity College, and only the general appearance of that. It consists of two noble squares, with stone buildings, and of Gothic architecture, intermingled with a later style. In the hall, where they dine, are whole-length portraits of Bacon, Dryden, and

Newton, chiefly copies from Kneller, which I worshipped as in duty bound. Among other smaller relics of popery which are usual with all such establishments, they have a very singular one here. After dinner they put up a prayer for the soul of Henry the *Eighth*, the founder. Is not this the climax of all mockery? The university, by the general glimpse I caught of it last night, appeared to me to cut a much nobler figure than I should have thought, after all the panegyrics passed on Oxford: but the country around is dismal indeed, and looks like the worst pictures of Holland, with nothing but flats, dykes, and stumpy willows with their bows on end. When I looked out of the coach-window, upon this wilderness covered with snow, it seemed just like an immense sheet of paper, diversified with streams of ink and ready-stuck pincushions fixed on posts. It does not snow at present, but, in default of that, it freezes as hard as possible, and a most insinuating wind comes through every nook and corner. But I have not time to wanton in description, and, in fact, have nothing more worth describing at present, unless it be the Cambridge butter, which, as you may have heard, is made in yards and served up in inches. In this frosty weather you might rule your paper with it, or roll out paste, or, peradventure, convert it into an Italian-iron. Pray write to me, my dear girl, as quickly as you can. I promise you that, for every one of your pages, I will send you two. Kiss Thornton heartily for me, and remember me to all friends round the fireside, where I hope Mrs. Hunter is safely seated again.—Your affectionate

HENRY.

Trinity College, Cambridge,
Sunday, 6th January, 1811.

. . . . Cambridge improves upon me at every turn; and I meet, everywhere, with respect and hospitality. To-day I dine with Wood, an old schoolfellow and patron of mine, who is tutor at Pembroke Hall, and a *Fellow* also, that is to say, he enjoys rooms and a regular stipend from the college,

and does what he pleases. These Fellows are absolute monks, without monkish superstition or restraint; they live luxuriously, walk, ride, read, and have nothing to get, in this world, but a good appetite of a morning. Yesterday I was in the chapel of this magnificent college, Trinity; at one end of it there is a statue of Newton by Roubilliac, full of thought and dignity; and at the other, over the altar, a painting of St. Michael trampling on Satan, by West. You may conceive the pleasure this latter circumstance gave me; it seemed, in some measure, to make me belong to the place: not that I regret altogether the not having been at college, for otherwise I should not have been so soon out in the world; and after all, London, as Goldsmith says, is the first of universities. It must be confessed, however, though you will not discover it in this dull letter, that Trinity College is full of inspiration, having educated Newton, Bacon, Dryden, Cowley, &c.; possessing libraries and other buildings like palaces, and having at the back one of the most rural walks and prospects in the county,—the river Cam running through shelving banks of grass, upon which, in the summer-time, you may literally lie down, to the water's edge, with your book and your pencil.

Trinity College, 8th January, 1811.

The weather at Cambridge is still piercingly cold, but the wind has abated, and we have fine sunshine days and moonlight evenings. Were the weather a little less severe, I can conceive nothing finer than walking round the cloisters of the smaller court of this college on such evenings. Even our cloisters at school, when the gates were shut in, had a very inspiring effect at such a time; they were twice as long as those of Westminster School, but the cloisters here are still longer, besides being twice as broad as Christ's, with a prospect on one side of trees and the river Cam, and the recollection of all the great men who have trodden them in the bloom of youth and genius. The other night I went to the chapel and heard the service, which is not only

imposing, but something more, if you can get rid of the idea that the persons about you regard it as a mere task. The men attend in surplices; there is an excellent organ and set of choristers; wax-lights and boughs of the box-tree are fixed alternately down the long reading-desks; and the chanting and anthems perfectly bear one away from earth. As for me, I was in the dean's seat, with my head just peering above a gorgeous cushion and huge psalm-book; and wanted nothing but a cowl and crucifix to be a complete monk on the occasion: not that I felt inclined to give up the world and its delight, any more than the monks themselves—beauty of every kind, *poeticized*, comes into the composition of my heaven—beauty of thinking, beauty of feeling, beauty of talking, beauty of hearing, and, of course, beauty of seeing, including visions of beautiful eyes and beautiful turns of limb. But this you knew long ago. This morning I visited Trinity Library, as I did yesterday that of Pembroke Hall and of the University. It is, like all the other buildings of this college, complete inside and out, and of a classical magnificence. The floor is of marble; the room 200 feet long and 40 broad; the bookcases, which are ranged at the sides, in the manner of stables, are of oak, and the projections are each surmounted with a bust of some great literary man. Several of these busts are by Roubilliac. "This," says I to Scholefield, "is the place for Mrs. Hunt to see." "Ay, sir, then she would be altogether happy, no doubt." Among some of the curiosities here, are a pair of Queen Elizabeth's shoes, which, if they fitted her, must have belonged to formidable feet. They are placed by the side of a Chinese pair, which are just as long as their quarterings, and of proportionate narrowness. They look like an infant's; but luckily there is a model of the foot to which they belong, and never was anything so hideous! The four lesser toes are bent under the sole, just as you would bend four fingers of your hand into the palm, so that nothing but the great toe is left; and the foot altogether looks exactly like a hoof of flesh terminated by a claw. I would fain have relieved myself by the sight of a truly noble curiosity in

another part of the room—the original of Milton's own handwriting; but it was maliciously locked up. So much for *our* chapel and library, for I am already a Trinity man in my likings as well as my lodgings. I forgot to tell you, however, that I have at last procured what I have so long wished for in vain—a book of chants to copy. I prosecute the task devoutly, and mean to lift up my voice, when I return, like any Luther. By-the-by, you never told me how the books and music arrived. Pray do not forget to put the latter in tune, and take care of my Handel. I enclose two letters, which Mrs. Hunter will have the goodness to give Mr. Button for me. Fireside remembrances. You will see me again certainly on Saturday night. I hope my little boy will not have forgotten me. Your affectionate

HENRY.

In the earliest days of their marriage, the young couple had lived at Beckenham, in Kent. The number of brief notes from the husband to his wife at this date implies that the residence was too remote from work, and the air of the place probably contributed to his illness; but, at all events, he thought so; for the cottage was abandoned soon after his return to London. In a note to an agent on the spot he sends various instructions for the removal of books, payment of bills, &c.; but he abstained from doing what some men would have accounted only a proper "stroke of business." "As to the cottage itself, Mr. H. can by no means reconcile it to his conscience to let it during the winter. If anybody should be inclined to take it for the summer, which is not likely, considering it is unfurnished and out of the road of coaches, well and good; but it is no more fit to stand rain and wind than a box of paper; and at such time Mr. H. would rather keep it at the expense of his purse, than let it at the expense of his decency."

Among the letters of this period, I find the first from Shelley:—

FROM PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

University College, Oxford, 2nd March, 1811.

SIR,—Permit me, although a stranger, to offer my sincerest congratulations on the occasion of that triumph, so highly to be prized by men of liberality; permit me, also, to submit to your consideration, as to one of the most fearless enlighteners of the public mind at the present time, a scheme of mutual safety, of mutual indemnification for men of public spirit and principle, which, if carried into effect, would evidently be productive of incalculable advantages. Of the scheme, the enclosed is an address to the public; the proposal for a meeting, &c. shall be modified according to your judgment, if you will do me the honour to consider the point. The ultimate intention of my aim is to induce a meeting of such enlightened, unprejudiced members of the community, whose independent principles expose them to evils which might thus become alleviated, and to form a methodical society which should be organized so as to resist that coalition of the enemies to liberty which, at present renders any expression of opinion on matters of policy dangerous to individuals. It has been for the want of societies of this nature that corruption has attained the height at which we now behold it; nor can any of us bear in mind the very great influence which, some years since, was gained by *Illuminism*, without considering that a society of equal extent might establish *rational liberty* on as firm a basis as that which would have supported the visionary schemes of a completely-equalized community. Although perfectly unacquainted (privately) with you, I address you as a common friend to *Liberty*, thinking that in cases of this urgency and importance that *etiquette* ought not to stand in the way of usefulness. My father is in Parliament, and on attaining twenty-one, I shall in all probability fill his vacant seat. On account of the responsibility to which my residence at this University sub-

jects me, I, of course dare not publicly to avow all that I think; but the time will come when I hope that my every endeavour, inefficient as they may be, will be directed to the advancement of Liberty.—I remain, sir, your most humble servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Leigh Hunt was to have visited his schoolfellows at Cambridge on the Christmas of 1811, but the examination of that year taking place at a later date, his visit was deferred indefinitely, and he went out of town again for his health in the summer of 1812, on a visit to a gentleman at Taunton, who was connected by marriage with his brother John—Mr. Marriott.

Taunton, 25th August, 1812.

. . . . From Wells we proceeded to Glastonbury, a town famous in old records for the most ancient abbey in the kingdom, for being the supposed birthplace of King Arthur, and for producing a species of whitethorn which was said to bud miraculously on Christmas-day; St. Joseph of Arimathea, it seems, having stuck his walking-stick in the ground on his arrival here, upon which the earth expressed its sense of the compliment by turning it into a thorn in blossom. Part of the ruins of the abbey are still standing, and form as interesting a set of that description as you can well fancy, though neither tall nor extensive. The abbot was very rich, and had lands, parks, &c.; and perhaps we may judge for what purpose his habitation was principally built, in finding that the only piece of it which remains entire is the kitchen. There is a fireplace at each of the four corners, with a huge chimney a-piece, running up out of the roof, and formed by the roof itself bending inwards. Against one of the walls is a mitred figure still standing entire. We asked a ragged little boy, who showed us the place, what it was. "Sir," said he, "I don't know; but it came from the *West Indies*." This answer, however, is nothing to one that was given my brother John, or rather to an equivoque that was produced by a question of

his, which he put to a footman, who was showing him a mansion in the neighbourhood of Taunton. Mr. Marriott and he were proceeding into a room full of pictures, when he turned to the servant, and asked whether they were the old masters. "Oh, yes, sir," said the man; "all the old master's." "What!" repeated my brother, "the productions of the *old* masters?" "Yes, sir," replied the other, "every one of them—they were all done by my old master!" The fact was, that the late possessor of the place had dabbled in painting, and hung a whole room with his pictures.—I did not know, till I left Glastonbury, that it was said to be the burial-place of King Arthur, or I should have had a hundred poetical reveries and recollections for that "president of chivalry;" but I am afraid the truth is, that he was buried in the same place in which he was born and lived,—the brain of a poet.

The *Examiner* had drawn attention upon itself of many kinds. Earnest liberals came forward, and sought the personal acquaintance of its young editor, and attorneys-general challenged his acquaintance in another form. Mr. Brougham had already made acquaintance with his client; and it was after some conversations with Brougham that Bentham wrote, asking for the pleasure of Leigh Hunt's company some day, "for a sociable hour in Queen's-square-place." The correspondence was followed up with a more precise invitation to a "Hermit's dinner at this my hermitage." The ruder invitations of attorneys-general were touched upon in another note to a private friend.

37, *Portland-street, Wednesday, 6th May*, 1812.

DEAR POWELL,—I accept with pleasure your invitation for next Saturday, and should have written to tell you so when I received your letter, but some interruption at the time, and occupation since, conspired to delay it till this moment. You cannot give me a better treat than a pleasant little company

and music; and now that you are upon the subjects of "attorney-generals" and "martyrdoms," pray recollect, O most ungrateful, but at the same time most complimentary of wags, that it is to former libellous fellows like myself, and to the continual noise they have kept up against the encroachments of power, that we owe the existence, or at least the perfection of these social enjoyments, which are nothing without an entire confidence and a freedom of speech. For instance,—I shall very much enjoy the merriment with which you mean to inspire us all,—not to mention your glees and sandwiches; but whenever the merriment turns upon certain public characters, or whenever we feel ourselves in the possession of such a liberty and confidence of sociality as are not to be found in France or Turkey, then, notwithstanding all my obligations to yourself for splitting my sides and making me die, I must beg leave to return my thanks to the Hampdens, the Holts, Andrew Marvells, and other old English freemen, whose exertions, acting upon us to this very day, enable us to say and to enjoy what we do. Pray, therefore, do not regard me as one who, from mere want of a better taste, am in love with prisons and persecutions; for, candidly speaking, I really do prefer a freedom of range to a gaol-room, and am not at all disposed, by natural inclination, to imitate poor Jack in the "Tale of a Tub," who used to stand at the corner of streets, and entreat the passengers to favour him with "a handsome kick," or "a reasonable thwack on the shoulders:"—all my endeavours are for the best and commonest interests of us all; and I beg you will look upon me as a truly considerate person, who acts as he does in order that future parties may sing their glees and swallow their bread and butter in comfort, and future Powells be as facetious as possible from morning to night.

You have not mentioned any particular hour on Saturday, but I take it for granted that you prepare for singing with a due irrigation of throat; and so, unless you write to the contrary, shall make my appearance at seven. — Yours sincerely,

LEIGH HUNT.

Henry Brougham conducted the defence of Leigh Hunt in the prosecution for the libel on the Prince Regent; but the great lawyer and the writer were drawn together by sympathy on many points, political and literary. In an early letter from Henry Brougham, accounting for being kept away by press of business, he expresses his conviction that the *Examiner* had done "a very real service to a whole people by promoting the Polish discussion, which, probably, from some vile personal motives of the *little juntos* who rule the daily press, has been obstinately avoided by those who *used* to *speak* most about liberty." In another letter he expresses his thanks for observations on divine right—thanks which he gives "both as a hater of tyranny and as a cultivator of religion, upon pure and philosophical grounds." "As far as home politics are concerned," continues Henry Brougham, asserting a sentiment which he has consistently sustained through life, and which is likely to receive new applications, "I should really like to see the eyes of our countrymen opened to their real situation after so victorious a war, as in the end it proved, and a good foundation laid for making them hereafter less prone to hostilities. Must we always be so knit to the Continent, even after our own dangers are terminated, that every quarrel of the German princes about territory or precedence shall draw us into a new war? Can't the people learn to hear of wars and rumours of wars without running out to fight, whether they have any concern in the business or not?"

FROM HENRY BROUGHAM.

York, Thursday [1812].

MY DEAR SIR,—I have expected your verses, and looked for much soothing from them during the tedium and strife of the circuit. I have been prevented from sending the notes on

Ravenna, by law business, and the correspondence arising out of the Orders in Council, and the kindness of the people towards me on that score—a kindness which is so utterly beyond my deserts, that it touches me infinitely, and makes me ashamed of myself. It also gives the lie to much of what foolish and hard-hearted spoilt men say against the people.

I have caused some out-of-the-way books on Italy to be looked out in Westminster, for the purpose of seeing what they say of Ravenna. As soon as I get there, I shall have the passages extracted.

The Luddite mania, and, in general, the alarms of the Tories, are less in this county than, in town, we have supposed. The sensible part of mankind, even of the magistrates, laugh at it. But those who do believe, believe by wholesale. They talk of the German novels, secret tribunals, and believe that everything is here, all of a sudden, organised like them! The judge (Bailey) has discountenanced such silly alarms; and all the persons accused are acquitted, to the infinite discomfiture of the loyal prosecutors. The prosecutions were all carried on by Government, with a great fracas and apparatus. The Luddites then carried on the attack in their turn, and t'other day I got large damages against a constable for accusing (and arresting) a man of being an arms-stealer. This also greatly alarms the loyal.—In haste, believe me yours truly,

H. Brougham.

To Henry Brougham.

Thursday Morning, 16*th July*, 1812.

Dear Sir,—Some unexpected and urgent business, which during Monday and Tuesday kept me away from my Parnassus (to earthly eyes a desk three feet high) prevented me from writing out the verses I promised you; and I now interrupt you, at this distance, to know whether you have time or inclination to look at them on the circuit. I confess I would rather delay till your return,—that is to say, unless

I can hear from you in the meantime respecting a promised manuscript of *yours*, inasmuch as I might then be enabled to settle some local points in the exordium which have hitherto left some of my passages gaping for information. If, however, you are too busy just now, or have left your journal behind you, I will make such extracts as I can; and take an opportunity, at the same time, of explaining to you what views I have with respect to the versification.—Yours very truly,

LEIGH HUNT.

37, *Portland Street, Oxford Road,*
Monday, 10*th August,* 1812.

DEAR SIR,—I hoped to have been well enough by this time to make some extracts from my poem for your perusal; for I have had an unexpected attack of an old nervous disorder, which I thought had left me, and though it was by no means so bad, thank Heaven, as what assaulted me some years since, yet it almost incapacitated me from any exertion whatever; and I have scarcely taken up a pen for these two or three weeks, except when it was absolutely forced into my hands by my editorial duties. But I must again put off these verses, and think I had better delay them at once till your return, when you shall have enough of them to make you wish heartily that they were better. As you are fond of translation, however, I will just mention that next Sunday's *Examiner* will contain such a one as I could manage from Catullus's delicious little poem of *Acme and Septimius:* I have had it by me among some others, which I made as studies, to familiarize me with the niceties and fitnesses of expression, and which I may as well put in the paper now and then, when the Parliament affords us matter no longer. I received a most flattering letter the other day from your friend, Mr. Bentham (flattering, because cordial, and accompanied with a present of some of his publications); and you may guess how unwell I have been, when I have been compelled to refuse a subsequent invitation which he sent me to dine with him next Wednesday. I am now getting better,

however, and hope again to see his handwriting before long. You will see, by yesterday's paper, what use I have made of the information you were good enough to send me; and you will see, I hope, some day, what use I shall make of your intelligence from Ravenna; but you shall first witness my wants on that head with your own eyes.

I envied your whirl to the north with your Italian and poetical recollections, and long to get into my Hampstead retreat, out of the "stir and smoke of this dim spot, which men call" London; for the weather here—and with you, too, perhaps—has been such, I believe, as the depth of summer never witnessed before,—wet, cold, and unrelenting. It would be a kindness in the clouds if they would but hang out a label, to let us know their object, or advance an explanatory flag, as the actors do in a pantomime. But I must resist the pleasure of chatting with you, or my nerves will be at me again.—Yours, my dear sir, very sincerely,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—Just as I had finished this letter, I received a visit from Mr. Bentham himself, who had not yet got my letter of excuse. He appeared to me like a father talking and laughing with one of his children. I am to dine with him next week, and to meet an Edinburgh reviewer. This would be awful work, if I had not found out that Edinburgh reviewers can be some of the most pleasant men in the world.

FROM HENRY BROUGHAM.

Brougham, Tuesday [1812].

MY DEAR SIR,—You'll think me very idle not to have sooner acknowledged your letter, and thanked you both for the Introduction and for *Acme and Septimius* (an old favourite). I am extremely pleased with both; and if you'll send me a little more of the poem, I should like to make a few free remarks. One or two *turns* struck me, but they were mere specks, and, I believe, from Dryden. In the translation, I doubt respecting your two diminutives—I rather more

than doubt—especially as to "poor fellow," which is inconsistent with the infinite refinement of the piece. Could you not contrive some more delicate diminutives? Also could you not give the *Sinister ante?* I think both you and Cowley give it the go-by. Now, I question if it does not convey some such meaning as that a *change* was effected in the lover —at least in the degree of possession. If it means anything bordering on indelicacy, it is indeed better omitted.

I think highly indeed of the translation. *Acme, love!* is extremely happy, but I could fill a page with instances. Pray try Arria and Pætus, from Martial. . . . .

Pray, let me have a little more of the poem, which takes my fancy wonderfully. I shall very soon send the extracts from my notes. I hope you got my packet from Lancashire. I wrote it at Allerton, but sent it from Knowsley, being sure a frank of mine ran great risk in Liverpool post-office. —Yours ever truly,

H. B.

I conclude your health is restored, but I wish you would not risk it by going to hot theatres.

To Henry Brougham.

Sunday, 27th September, 1812.

My dear Sir,—I received your letter from Allerton, and should have taken a pleasure in directing my answer to that place, but I was not sure of your movements; and shall now be obliged to you, if you will let me know how long you mean to stay in your present quarters, in order that I may prepare my communications accordingly. The repetition of your invitation is extremely grateful to me, but I am farther than ever from being able to avail myself of it, delighted as I should be to have you to myself for a few sunshiny days in the solitudes of which you told me. I am only now gaining strength by slow degrees and small portions of exercise, after having been reduced to skin-and-bone, and must remain in a nursing state for some weeks. I shall get, however, into the

country, though scarcely out of town—being about to move, as I believe I told you, to a cottage at West-end, Hampstead, where I do not despair of seeing you sit down with me to a plain joint and a pudding, some day on your return. The cottage is really and *bonâ fide* a cottage, with most humble ceilings and unsophisticated staircases; but there is green about it, and a little garden with laurel: and I can put you into a room where there will be a little library of poets, and an original portrait of Milton to overlook us as we sit drinking our glass of wine,—so that you shall not help enjoying yourself in some measure.

Accept my best thanks for your packets about Ravenna, with some of the contents of which I was already acquainted, with others not. For Scoto, in particular, I have been hunting everywhere to no purpose. Dante's strange epitaph I remember well; but I should rather look upon its conclusion as corroborative of his being the author than otherwise. He was very bitter, you know, against Florence, and particularly so against the vice he imputes to his countrymen. In his *Inferno* he devotes a whole canto to it, and does not scruple, among his criminals, to place his old master Brunetto Latini, whom, nevertheless, he treats with the greatest respect, both in that and other passages of his works. He was an unaccountable sort of fellow, and, I take it, must have been *bilious*.

I need not tell you how much it pleases me to find that you like my verses. I shall send you some more of the poem as soon as I can please myself with one or two necessary alterations, and in the meantime, you see, I furnish my regular weekly translations. When I tell you that I shall be very happy to see your "free remarks," you will do me the justice to believe me sincere. The fact is, that so far from being inclined to reject any observations that may do me good, I never satisfy myself with what I do, and have kept these things in my desk, months and months, without taking courage to print them. I do not want a general confidence, but it fails me in particulars; and I have tried those con-

founded little delicacies you mention over and over again, and sent them forth with a sort of hopelessness at last. But I shall not lose sight of them still. The touch in which I have succeeded best, of this kind, is, I think, in rendering the *quidquid est domi cachinnorum* of Catullus's *Return Home*, which you have seen by this time. I confess having given the slip to *Sinister ante*. The truth is, I believe, that I did not understand it, though, if it has any meaning at all, and is not a mere corruption of the text, it must intend something of what you say. The commentators generally suppose, that the union of the two lovers had been hitherto prevented—which is borne out perhaps by the *Nunc ab auspicio*, &c.; but they wrote in so many different ways, that they appear to have been all puzzled with it. I adopted the reading of Vossius as the most reasonable one, and more consonant to the construction which you put upon it. I have done what you desired with *Arria and Pætus;* but am little pleased with it, and must keep it by me till it grows better.

And now to make your grievous transition: Your friends and admirers here are all wishing that you would stand for Westminster, and I confess I should like to see you adding another congenial triumph to those which you have already gained on that spot; but there is something in being asked, instead of asking, that very much dignifies the seat obtained, and would make you perhaps prefer Liverpool, if only on that account. I cannot but say also, that though Sir F. Burdett is a man of whom I would give a good deal to think as highly as possible, yet there is something about him to which I would rather not see you standing side by side. I like his ardour; I like the better part of his popularity; and believe I am still more with him in his reforming notions than with yourself; but there is a gross, indiscriminate vein running through his conduct, and an apparent moral laxity about him, that do not agree with a nice and proper independence; and I think the situation altogether would do no honour to a great and philosophic politician. Yet I do not know, after all;—in fact, I can conclude nothing about the matter, and

you must forgive my talking in this manner, for the sake of the sincere interest with which I observe all that you say and do.—Yours ever,

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM HENRY BROUGHAM.

Brougham, Wednesday, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you heartily for *Pyrrha : simplex munditiis* is quite right I am clear, and, on that construction, beautifully rendered. What you say of the line in *Sirmio*, "Ridete," &c. is exactly as it struck me. Indeed, I had meant to say when I last wrote, that that seemed to me the *forte* of it. Alas! I am called off to other pursuits—I leave my quiet here to-morrow, for that very unquiet thing a contested election. I go to Liverpool to-morrow.

I have been drawn into it by degrees, and we are sanguine. I mean my friends are. For myself I am both doubtful, and, as to the result, I shall not be quite mortified if I am thrown out : I should try to serve the good cause as strenuously out of Parliament as in it.

As to Westminster—I dare not look to such a thing—but in truth it is the summit of popular ambition—and I may live to try it—it is a really important situation—and may enable a man to do infinite good. I pray you consider this secret wish of mine as quite private—I must *care about nothing* but *Liverpool* for some days to come. Yours truly,

H. B.

Brougham, Friday, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for *Sirmio*. It is close and spirited and elegant—for some things increasing the beauty of the original, (as "*all* the wished-for bed," which is highly expressive of the hearty meal, of lying down and stretching, which a weary man devours) ; in some rendering it admirably where rendering it at all was most difficult— as "*ridete quid-quid*," &c. ; in some rendering it excellently and faithfully, where the difficulty was less, as "*Hoc est quod*," &c. ; in some

falling short of the beauty and simplicity of the Latin—chiefly owing to the two languages, as "*O quid*," &c. for really these three lines have always dwelt on my ear as amongst the most melodious in all the range of Latin numbers. I object to "easy-chair" vehemently. So I should to "apple," &c. were it not borne out by the original (*ocelle*) which the former is not.—"How gladly," &c. is a beauty superadded, but a great one—I mean the "Nest." But I am running on into a critique. I had intended only to say, that I had received a letter from Roscoe, so full of the paltry subjects of the day, on politics, electioneering, &c., that he has not answered me on the points (*Acme and Septimius*), about which I wrote to him. So I have rated him for his estrangement from the Muses; though I have little right to complain; for it is all in my behalf that this most excellent man is thus leaving his native haunts, among the Italian choristers, to enter the storms of faction.

We are, I suppose, dissolved before this time. Be it so—a worse Parliament has seldom been knocked on the head. I won't say Peace to its manes! but eternal reprobation and curses on its memory. *Walcheren*—that is enough. We need not go further for a monumental inscription.—I hope you sufficiently pity me, in the prospect of being dragged away from this delightful and most quiet retirement, of which I had but begun to taste after ten months of storm and labour. Yours truly,

H. B.

To Henry Brougham.

[*3rd October*, 1812.]

My dear Sir,—If you do not take care, you will make me garrulous on the subject of poetry. I confess I thought *Sirmio* would please you, particularly as you were just getting into your rural home yourself. You will have seen by this time, in a letter which I sent off yesterday, that I challenged your opposition of the *Ridete quidquid*, and it delighted me to find that you anticipated me on that head.

Thanks for your giving a double value to praise by the sincerity of objection. I do assure you, that next to your praise (for I do not affect to put that second) I was gratified by your "vehement" censure of the "easy-chair," because it shows that we go together completely in the feelings of the composition. That same "easy-chair"—that vile "inutile lignum"—tormented me to the last, and I said to myself as I let it go,—Now, such and such a person will find me out, and swear that I have been eking out a line for the sake of the one before it. So you see I did not hope to escape. In fact, I really intended, in my last, to beseech your mercy on the point, so that you would have anticipated both my self applause and condemnation,—but it escaped me, as such sort of condemnation is apt to do with most people. I have no notion that you will think so well of the *Pyrrha* as of the two pieces that preceded it. "For his play" is not well, and the *miseri quibus* has become two lines instead of four words; but you will give me credit for using the word "exquisite" in its etymological as well as usual sense, and put yourself occasionally into the place of the mere English reader, who must have an idea vividly explained to him, now and then, at the expense of brevity. The "fabula sacer," &c. is desperate work to a translator, and still more so to such readers,—for whose sake, by-the-by, or chiefly so, it is that I write such prolegomena in prose. Pray, what is your favourite ode in Horace? or have you, like myself, a dozen favourites, among which you do not know how to choose? Never was more fit poet for Englishman,—being ready for you at all hours, and in all humours, with what subject you please. I have an idea of endeavouring to give a course of samples in this way,—one ode for each humour,—before I conclude my weekly verses; but not if it interferes with the progress of *Rimini*,—for I must take time to get into my originals before I feel my proper way out of them into English; and sometimes the turns are so coy to our broad and sturdy language, that this is not done in a hurry.

I sympathise with you most heartily on your prospect of

being obliged to quit Brougham:—and yet, considering how politicians go at present, you deserve to be congratulated for having wherewithal to be pitied on this occasion,—I mean, in having a taste for such retirements. It helps you, too, to carry back into politics that which adorns and dignifies them,—nay, and makes them sounder:—but I shall be talking common-place to you. Pray, take your revenge, if I should need these philosophical reminiscences on a certain occasion, and repeat them in your turn; for I do not hesitate to confess to you, that if all the comforts I promise myself in my little cottage,

"Musæ, libertas, otia, libris,
Sylvaque,"

are to be forced from me next term, I shall have more to conquer than I had before, and (for the moment) feel as if I were plucked up by the roots. But I do not expect it after all. The Parliament, by to-day's paper, is dissolved—a fit end, as old Fuller might have said, for so dissolute a knave. You ring its knell gloriously.—Yours very truly,

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM HENRY BROUGHAM.

Brougham, 14th October, 1813.

. . . . The projected work which you mention, I presume, is now in great forwardness, and I shall be anxious for its success. I doubt not you have overcome the kind of instinctive horror which I fancy I should feel were I a poet, and about to commit my lays to the wide, unfriendly world. The only way in which I can form an idea of the situation, is to suppose myself about to publish a speech upon a subject not admitting of much argument, and without ever having actually delivered it. The only thing that keeps up one's spirits in speeches of that kind, is the noise and motion of the delivery. This roundabout way brings me to a state of great ideal uneasiness. But I should not be trying to frighten you—rather the reverse. . . . .

Temple, Wednesday.

I need not tell you how much I admire that astonishing genius (Voltaire), whom I should call second to Newton if his line were not so different; you can hardly class them by reference to one another, any more than you can compare them together. It is equally unnecessary to add how heartily I pity those who rail at him—in their ignorance certainly—and abuse him as superficial; because, judging of superior natures by their own, they cannot conceive how a man can be both lively and profound. I will even go so far as to admit that there is in his writings much natural piety—and that he had really some religion in his composition is certain—though he was quite sceptical upon the immortality of the soul. Condorcet states this, in his Life of him. But taking his whole writings together, I consider them as not merely directed against Christianity, but all religion whatever. This is their tendency if not their aim—and a powerful effect they have had both upon Theists and Christians.

But let us pass over their effects on the former class of believers. I think he who attacks Christianity does a great and serious injury to mankind. I say so independent of all faith or reasonable belief in that system—and I hold that a pure and philosophical Deist may, in perfect consistency, reprobate and deeply lament whatever tends to vilify Christianity in the eyes of the world. First—because so long as the bulk of mankind believe it, he who *laughs and rails* at it is guilty of the same offence with him who should laugh and rail at our near relatives—and expose them to *us*, who see them with the blindness of affection; but next, because I am firmly convinced that the real good operated by that religion is a thousandfold greater than the evils its abuses have worked; and lastly, because it really approaches as near to pure theism as the bulk of men can go, in their present state of information. . . . .

Lancaster, Saturday [1812].

DEAR SIR,—I cannot but greatly applaud the boldness as well as the ability of your attacks upon the ruinous and

unworthy conduct of our present rulers; and I am persuaded that the press alone can now be looked to as the saviour of the country, and the discussions in Parliament *through* the press. But this makes me the more anxious that the press should be saved from the strong hand of power, which I fear will be raised against it. Without at all counselling timid or complying measures, I would only recommend to you as much caution as may be consistent with the bold and manly expression of your sentiments on men and measures. One passage in last *Examiner* has somewhat frightened me; and I am persuaded, from what I hear, that if they take no notice of it, they abstain only from the apprehension that they will lose more than they can gain by it. The country is in a most dangerous and unfortunate state, and all our prudence as well as courage is required to preserve what remains of liberty.

I learn that attempts are making in certain quarters to buy off some newspapers. I have heard the individual ones named; and as soon as I *perceive* that the bargain has succeeded, I shall put you in possession of their names, that you may reprobate so base a treachery.

I perceive that the Court journals attack the Opposition for *now* beginning to reprobate the Prince's conduct to his wife. This applies not, however, to *all* the Opposition; at least, for myself, I can say that I brought forward the subject long before the 18th of February, when Mr. Adam (the Prince's chancellor) came down with a statement of his affairs; and explained the want of more money by stating, as a chief cause of the deficit, the Princess living separate from her husband. This was during the civil list debates.

LETTERS FROM SURREY GAOL.

THE Government was resolved upon a vigorous blow at the paper which was so much in advance of its time. The anniversary of St. Patrick's Day was celebrated, in 1812, by a public dinner, at which the Marquis of Lansdowne was chairman. At this meeting the health of the Prince Regent was received with great coldness; when Mr. Sheridan attempted a vindication of his royal friend, the company hissed. The *Morning Post* endeavoured to compensate the "Mæcenas of the age," an "Adonis in loveliness," in a eulogium of astonishing fulsomeness; to which the *Examiner* replied with a critical comparison of the flattery with the facts. The consequence was a Government prosecution, the first to take effect; the editor and the printer, Leigh and John Hunt, being sentenced to be imprisoned for two years, and to pay a fine of a thousand pounds. An intimation was conveyed from the Government, that if the brothers would undertake to abstain in future from commenting on the actions of the Prince Regent, means should be found to spare both the fine and the imprisonment. They declined all compromise; and parted to enter hackney-coaches, for their respective prisons, on the 3rd February, 1813. Leigh Hunt, at the time, was suffering under one of his attacks of hypochondriacal

debility, and he was recalled from one of his visits to the country in order to receive sentence. It was while he was still out of town, that a friend wrote to cheer his melancholy with the report suggested by a visit to the absent writer's home. "This is what I saw," he writes, "but what I heard was better. The notice of Bentham, introduced by Romilly! How proud ought you to be to have drawn this old man from the chimney corner, to shake you by the hand ere he died! Really you are well rewarded for all your anxiety, for all your apprehension, for all your obloquy. But, above all, the offer from Government, which has made you a hero at once; and which not only quashes and annihilates the pending, but all future, prosecutions."

As soon as the sentence of the judge consigned Leigh Hunt to prison, his readers testified an increased interest in the *Examiner*, and his personal friends rallied round him with the warmest affection. I have before me a letter written by a man who has made his mark in English literature, who, as he says of himself, had no political bias, and whose letters show him to be a man of so much strong feeling, sound judgment, powerful faculties, and animated mind, that his friendship must have been prized by all who knew him. In fact, the very deferential manner in which other schoolfellows speak of Thomas Mitchell, the translator of *Aristophanes*, show the esteem in which he was held by all around.

Monday Morning, 10th February, 1813.

DEAR LEIGH,—I thought at first of sending the enclosed through the medium of Mrs. Hunter, but I do not imagine it will come to you so speedily; and though you are not yet prepared to *see* your friends in your new abode, I hope you have no objection to *hearing* from them while in this

"durance vile." This is a wretched morning for you—hardly tolerable to those at liberty, and must be very irksome in confinement. Indeed, I feel very much for you. But bear up! this is the agony of your glory. I have not said half enough to you in my letter of the satisfaction which yesterday's paper gave me—its manliness, its simplicity, and single-heartedness. Keep to that tone, and you must make even your political enemies admire you; but I am confident that, let the current of your feelings set which way they will, they will run in a proper channel. I am not identified, as you know, with either your political or religious opinions; but I cannot witness your consistency and firmness, and know, as I do, the pure source from which they are derived, without expressing my admiration of them to yourself, and representing them on all occasions—and with such weight as my powers will admit—in their proper light to others. I beg my best and kindest remembrances to Mrs. Hunt.—Yours most truly and affectionately,

T. Mitchell.

(*Seems to have been written on the day before the preceding.*)

My dear Friend Leigh,—Your *Examiner* of this day has given me the highest pleasure: it does equal honour to your head and your heart. I think your situation, untoward as it is at present, an enviable one. It depends upon yourself now to be among those—

"Spiriti magni,
Che di vederli in me stesso n 'esalto;"

which I think is the highest compliment a man can either wish or deserve. It would be idle in me to suggest motives of consolation, which your own sense and self-consciousness of right will supply more abundantly in you than any warmth of friendship and good wishes on my part could suggest. I write this merely to supply, in some degree, the want of conversational intercourse—a restriction which I trust will not subsist much longer. . . . . I wish you would make it a rule to write, on some particular day or days of the week,

to me; and let me know what course of study you are pursuing. I am this evening engaged in versifying the thirty-fourth sonnet of Petrarch. A friend desired me to give him a *literal* translation of it, that he might compare it with a versified translation which a sister of his, whom he has just lost, recommended with particular earnestness to him just before she expired. I enclose a copy of it, that I may know whether you agree with me in my sense of it. . . . . Barnes, Field, and myself spent the evening of Saturday at Pitman's, where we met Slatter, and two or three other men, whom I do not think you know. You may be sure that your case was a matter of great discussion and admiration among us. . . . . .

The friends who first came were unquestionably refused admittance. Many other friends, unpolitical as well as political, sent in the testimony of their solicitude. Barron Field took active steps to procure a relaxation of the rule for the admission of friends. In the prison, at Clerkenwell, John Hunt had already been allowed some indulgences, and the governor of the prison personally waived restrictions upon the admission of visitors. This excellent governor, indeed, set the example of good feeling. "He is painting," writes John to his brother, "another room for me, and he will also clean the one I am in—both of which I am to have. They are opposite to each other, and have a light prospect. He has also told Mr. Whiting that, when the bustle has subsided, I shall have his garden to walk in." Sir William Knighton and Dr. Gooch were in attendance at the Surrey jail, and Barron Field brings forward their strong testimony to the injury which the confinement and rigours of the prison were likely to inflict—injury far beyond any castigation legitimately intended by the punishment. The prisoner himself had already addressed a note upon the sub-

ject to the head jailor of the prison—thus far without success.

To Mr. Ives.

Surrey Jail, 5th February, 1813.

Mr. Leigh Hunt presents his compliments to Mr. Ives, and puts down his wishes upon paper as requested.

His first and greatest wish, then, is to be allowed to have his wife and children living with him in the prison. It is to be observed, that his is a new case within these walls; and not only so, but that his habits have always been of the most domestic kind, that he has not been accustomed to be from home a day long, and that he is subject, particularly at night-time, to violent attacks of illness, accompanied with palpitations of the heart and other nervous affections, which render a companion not only much wanted, but sometimes hardly to be dispensed with. His state of health is bad at the present moment, as everybody may see; not so bad indeed as it has been, and he wishes to make no parade of it; but quite bad enough to make him feel tenfold all the wants of his situation, and to render it absolutely necessary that his greatest comforts should not all be taken away. If it would take time, however, to consider this request, his next wish is that his wife and children be allowed to be with him in the daytime. His happiness is wound up in them, and he shall say no more on this subject except that a total separation in respect of abode would be almost as bad to him as tearing his body asunder.

His third and last request is, that his friends be allowed to come up to his room during the daytime; and if this permission be given, he will give his word that it shall not be abused. His physician has often declared that society is necessary to his health; but though he has been used to every comfort that domestic and social happiness can bestow, he is content with as little as possible, and provided his just wish be granted, could make almost any sacrifice.

This is all he has to say on the subject, and all with which he should ever trouble anybody. The hope of living in Mr. Ives's house he has given up; many privations, of course,

he is prepared to endure; with the other regulations of the prison he has no wish to interfere; and from what little has already been seen of him in this place, he believes that every credit will be given him for conducting himself in a reasonable and gentlemanly manner; for as he is a stubborn enemy of what is wrong, so is he one of the quietest and most considerate friends of what is right. He has many private friends who would do their utmost for him; and his character, he believes, has procured him some public ones of the highest description, who would leave no means untaken for bettering his condition, but he would willingly leave his comforts to those about him. To conclude, he is prepared to suffer all extremities rather than do himself dishonour; but it is no dishonour to have the feelings of a husband and a father: and till he is dead to them and to everything else, he shall not cease exerting himself in their behalf.

Soon after he entered prison, Leigh Hunt began to keep something like a journal. He did not continue it, but he preserved the commencement, which is found among his papers, and which is interesting as a memorandum of his opinions and purposes at the date of writing it. It is addressed to "My dear children."

MEMORANDUM.

14th March, 1813.

I had been but a few days in this place before I determined to keep a journal during my abode in it, and to address the journal to you. I found many reasons for so doing, but the principal were—My own amusement or relief, a desire to fix and to keep a watch over myself in one or two things I had undertaken to accomplish, the hope of showing you how much a good conscience and innocent studies can do for a man under a melancholy illness and in worldly difficulties; and, in fine, some distant idea of proving to the world, should it ever become necessary, what were my grounds of conduct and habits of thinking,—what upheld me, if I survive these two

years; and what was the original cause of my death, if I do not.

In thinking upon these subjects, I was led to a considerable enlargement of my plan, by following up the account of my present situation with a memoir of my past life. I am not very old, it is true, nor has my life been very abundant in incident; but considering my age and my pursuits, I have more variety perhaps to put into my history than most men-of-letters; private biography too is of such a nature, that it might even be difficult to render it uninteresting, if there is anything like candour and good sense in it; at any rate, I shall interest you and amuse myself; and to an affectionate father and a sick man, these are no common inducements. What I write, however, both in the memoir and in the journal, will not want the more general interest arising from the mention of other names better known, or worthier to be known, than mine; though, of course, I shall say more of myself than of anybody,—and shall indeed say as little as possible of others, where they are not in some measure connected with the formation of my character, with my happiness, or my public life. As to the tone in which I shall write, and the medium, just or flattering, or between both, through which I may view myself,—I leave you and others to judge on those matters, and shall not stop to say anything upon the particular feelings with which people in general become their own biographers. My biography, such as it is, will be confined to what, I sincerely trust, will not be the most *mentionable* part of my life,—I mean, for the acquirement of knowledge, and the attainment of an honourable and various reputation. Indeed, unless I do something more than I have done—*much* more, as an author—I must request, very unaffectedly and with a full reliance on your obedience, that you do not suffer this little work to pass beyond your own private circle, but in case of *one* circumstance,—and that is, in case my memory is wantonly or ignorantly traduced by those who think it worth while to notice it; and then only, provided those persons in whose soundness of judgment you have most

reliance, shall think such a proceeding necessary ;—but this I must rather leave in the hands of your mother and your uncles, for if such necessity occur, it must be long before you have any knowledge of it. The publication of the memoir at some distant day by yourselves, I must confine to one of two cases that shall warrant it:—first, the attainment of the reputation above-mentioned, such as will excite a real and proper curiosity in the better part of the community; and second, some urgent pecuniary necessity on your own part, such as you cannot get over without pain by any other mode, and such as, I fervently hope, my dear children, you will never experience. In a word,—to put an end to this long introduction,—though I am very far from professing to be void of self-love (as my thinking it proper to say anything of myself may probably show for me), I believe I shall be as candid on my own subject as most persons who are reckoned candid; and, at all events, I have to inform you that, with regard to *facts*, I shall confine myself strictly, like an honest historian of old times, to such as I was personally concerned in or witnessed.

And now, to plunge *in medias res*. I commence this account on a Sunday evening, in one of the corner top rooms of the Surrey prison, looking out, or rather from which you may look out if you climb high enough, into the inner courts where the felons walk. It is the highest and farthest room to the right hand, with two even semicircular windows, as you face the western side of the quadrangle, and bordering the Debtors' or front side. Your mother is busy in preparing supper: you, John, are fast asleep on our bed, and you, Thornton, are with your mother's family, away from us at present, on account of your health, which would not permit your being here till we get into better apartments; we see you sometimes to dinner, and during your absence talk of you continually, and relate to each other fifty sayings and tricks of yours, which are the more delightful to recount, because we generally keep them, in this manner, for our own private comfort, and do not help to spoil you and to tire our friends by babbling them abroad. But your mother insists that I shall not spoil my gruel either;

so I must drop my pen for this evening, with a blessing on you both.

15th March.

I shall now relate to you under what circumstances I came to this place. You will have read, that the trial of your uncle and myself was in the first instance put off. The reason privately given by the Solicitor-General was said to be, that the Attorney-General, just then appointed, had not formally entered upon his office. The non-attendance, however, of special jurors was believed, by many, to be the true reason, as it afterwards turned out; a still greater number, including our advocate himself, concluded that a pretence was taken to drop the business altogether; and for our parts, we were among the latter. The opinions of all our friends, though some of them had reckoned on a very different result, confirmed us in our security, and I returned to my studies with the same quietness and serenity that had accompanied me through this and a similar suspense formerly.

My health at this time was reckoned stouter than it had ever been, perhaps because my body was so; but the sign was no good one to those who understood the matter; and my tailor said to me, when I went to him to be measured some months afterwards according to my altered dimensions, "Ah, sir, I used to tell everybody that you were getting too much flesh for your bones." In fact, I had had symptoms enough for some months, if I had attended to them as I ought; my eyes and flesh were getting jaundiced: the former had a quantity of motes continually before them, and I became every day more averse to exercise. Here, my dear children, in this aversion,—in this lamentable bodily indolence, brought on by long habits of studious lounging and in-door enjoyment, was the cause of all that I have since suffered. Some years before I had had a fit of illness precisely of the same description, and owing to the same cause; my family had suffered from it before me; I had even a grand-aunt (now in a dying state at the time I am writing), who had lost the use of her limbs solely, as it was prophesied she would, from her

taking no exercise, and from sitting all the day long with a book before her. But nothing could warn me sufficiently. It is true, I had lately taken to walking every day, on account of the neighbourhood of the Hampstead fields, which from various causes had ever been my delight; but my body might almost as well have been sitting, as moving along with a luxurious leisureliness that shook not a particle in it; besides, I never stepped out-of-doors without a book in my hand, mostly a volume of Spenser or Milton; and whenever I came to a stile, there I sat for a quarter of an hour, with my back dropped round, and my legs dangling, in order to enjoy the complicated luxury of resting limbs, a cooling air, a fanciful passage, and the sense of being wrapped up in a rural landscape. I think I can now feel myself, in my favourite spot at the foot of the hill, with the metropolis completely shut out from behind, and the church looking over its gentle eminence of green trees. On the right is the path leading to West-end, all around me nothing but leaves, and silence, and a pretty undulation of meadow ground; while the grave of my mother, which has long ceased to have painful associations, seems to breathe over the scene an additional placidity, and I feel a grateful sense of present existence, and an earnest of a still better one hereafter. But I look off my paper, and the scene vanishes.

16th March.

To-day, we have moved down into our new lodgings. They are the two lower rooms—one a large, and one a small one—on the south side of the infirmary, and have hitherto been unoccupied; but you shall hear more of them by and by. My feelings have been pleasanter since moving; partly, no doubt, owing to this change, but principally to a good fit of my illness, which I had yesterday, and which always helps me in the end. It ought, in justice; for it handles me grievously. By the way, as my literary pursuits will make a principal figure in this journal, I must no longer omit to notice them, though I cannot do it with much precision till

we are settled,—and here I must tell you, that the two main objects I have in view during my imprisonment are,—the completion of a poem, which I began last summer; and the acquirement of a full and proper knowledge of what a journalist, of my description, ought for credit's sake and for conscience' sake to know—I mean, of history and of legislation. To these I mean to add, if possible, a course of epic poetry from Homer to Virgil, and so through the Italian school to the English, *restoring*, as I go, my Greek, which I have sadly neglected, and getting a fuller mastery of my Italian; but though I shall fancy my bust of the great poetic patriarch shaking its reverend locks at me every time I look upon it, unless I can manage this addition, yet my sense of more immediate duties must excuse me, if I cannot. I know enough of poetry to feel myself confident and secure when I go about it,—I have long studied its language, and believe I am at last so well-possessed of the art, that I have only to wield my pen and call up my visions; and this, you see, I mean accordingly to perform; but what has just happened to me in public life, together with a miserable blunder which I made a few weeks ago upon a matter of every-day knowledge, has made it doubly necessary that I should deserve the interest I have excited, and take care how I hazard the reputation and the effect of a right spirit by the want of just information. It is true, I have hitherto confined myself, as a journalist, to very general politics, and principally to the ethical part of them, to the diffusion of a liberal spirit of thinking, and to the very broadest view of characters and events, always referring them to the standard of human nature and common sense; but although this may be enough for a general reformist, and is calculated to do, and, I believe, has done, some good among the better minds of the public, yet it is far from sufficient for a particular one,—for one who undertakes, or should undertake, to improve, from a full knowledge of what is imperfect,—one, who ought to have completely studied the differences of things, and to come to his great work with a knowledge suitable to his intentions. In short, the common

sense—the moral part of my business—I know well enough, and am enabled by it to detect most of the wretched errors and [MS. illegible] which the ordinary politicians of the day would pass upon us for good government; but I want the acquired learning — the details, the out-of-door experience; and in getting this, I trust I know my own honour and happiness sufficient, not to split upon the old political rock, and be shipwrecked of the other.

17th March.

I forgot, after all, to mention what I have read or written since I came here. All that I have read through is Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, a work of much pretence and little performance; Scott's edition of Sir Tristrem; nothing new in the notes, the best part of it, Mr. Scott's own conclusion, and the abstracts of two romances on the [MS. illegible] Mr. Ellis, done with his usual pleasant gentlemanly facility; the lives of Joinville and Froissart (preparatory to a perusal of their histories); Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*—mera poesis; Mr. Rose's *Partenopex de Blois*—poor work; and Macgill's *Travels in Turkey*, &c., which have nothing new or ingenious, but pleased me from the spirit of sociality and good temper which the writer exhibits. However, the description of Greek islands and Oriental manners is always a charm to me. I have also looked into Bentham's *Traité de Législation*, which I am about to enter upon regularly; Howard on Prisons; Blount's (Bishop Earle's) *Characters*,—sensible and witty, but too much sought out, like most of those things; *The Travels of Count Stolberg*, one of the German sentimentalists, which I could not get through; Hoole's translation of Ariosto—a miserable business, like all the other translations of this rival of Fairfax; and Smollett's *Travels*, which disgusted me, as they have some others. There is a vein in Smollett—a Scotch vein—which is always disgusting to people of delicacy; but it is enough to say of him in this work, that he is an invalid with whom even invalids cannot sympathise—one has no patience with his

want of patience. (Is not this a touch of *natural* criticism?) I have read some of my Spenser, which I am annotating, in refreshing intervals, with Milton; part of Gilpin on *Forest Scenery*, which I mean to finish; some Essays in Montaigne and Sir William Temple—those two very amusing and very instructive specimens of a mixture of old woman's gossip and philosophic enlargement; and Hume's reign of Mary, with the conclusion of Henry the VIII.—my pen in my hand. I am now in Elizabeth, and am reading with it the *Life of Sir Walter Ralcigh*, by Cayley. Of pamphlets and references to books, I say nothing. You will think this a strange medley, perhaps; but you must bear in mind the poetical, as well as political, part of me, and then you will wonder at none of my miscellaneous vagaries. Invention must have its materials as well as science.

With regard to my writing, I have done nothing beyond the accustomed articles for the *Examiner* and what you see before you, with the exception of a solitary paragraph in my poem (beginning, "Never was nobler finish of fair sight," and ending with "shining hair,") and the supply of one or two previous lines which were wanting. I had left it standing at the conclusion of the preceding paragraph for six months, without being able to touch it. Poetry is very trying work, if your heart and spirits are in it, particularly with a weak body. The concentration of your faculties, and the necessity and ambition you feel to extract all the essential heat of your thoughts, seem to make up that powerful and exhausting effect called inspiration. The ability to sustain this, as well as all other exercises of the spirit, will evidently depend, in some measure, upon the state of your frame; so that Dryden does not appear to have been altogether so fantastical in dieting himself for a task of verse; nor Milton and others, in thinking their faculties stronger at particular periods; though the former, perhaps, might have rendered his caution unnecessary by undeviating temperance; and the latter have referred to the sunshine of summer, or the in-door snugness of frosty weather, what they chose to attribute to a loftier influence.

But to resume my legal adventures :—

18*th March.*

A day of petty hindrances and interruptions,—talking with visitors, getting rid of painters and carpenters, &c. Read a little in the *Life of Raleigh*, and wrote letters; but have arrived at nine o'clock, without being able to continue my journal. See to what the resolutions of yesterday amount! Yet I still make my record of the day, or I shall not attain my principal object in so doing; and as long as one resolution is kept, many others will not be broken. Of a very welcome visit from Mr. Mill (a Benthamite) and Dr. Lindsey of Bow (which I must except, by-the-by, from those of a smaller description) I shall say something hereafter, when I come to speak of the particular kindnesses intended me. Thornton came to us yesterday, and we are now a complete family of prisoners.

19*th March.*

Another day of interruptions, as I foresee will be the case for a week or two. Read a little in Raleigh, and wrote for the *Examiner*.

The "new lodgings" to which the prisoner was consigned were in the sick-ward, where he was allowed separate rooms for himself, and he has described the manner in which he was permitted to fit them up. He had two rooms—a small one, with a high window, which the present writer still remembers entering while Leigh Hunt was in conversation with Henry Brougham; and a larger room, covered with a paper representing a trellis of roses, and having a door which opened upon a small enclosed garden. He also had liberty to walk in the kitchen-garden behind the governor's house. Amongst the furniture was a pianoforte. A note to Mr. Button conveys thanks to him and his partner, Mr. Whittaker, for volunteering the loan of a lute as a solace to the prisoner. Leigh Hunt was also allowed to have his wife and children with him; but, early in the

year, it was thought desirable to send the children to the sea-side, whither they were taken by their mother; and she was followed by a constant series of letters.

To Marianne.

Surrey Gaol, 20th April, 1813.
Half-past twelve.

. . . . Here I have been interrupted by the entrance of Mr. *Hill*, accompanied by Barnes, and been obliged to show him the secrets of my prison-house; so that, what with this exhibition, and the near approach of Sir John S——

27th April.

You will think this a strange letter, my dear love! but I was obliged to break off abruptly at the arrival of the very person; and Bess was good enough, at her own suggestion, to take up the pen for me after dinner, as I could not well leave the company.—Now to show you my gratitude for your journal, by giving you mine. On Friday, of course, I had no visitors. On Saturday, Mitchell and Alsager dined with me; on Saturday, Mr. Symonds ("Don't make us a fright"); and yesterday, Mitchell, Barnes, Sir John S——, Mrs. Scott, and Henry, who succeeded Marriott the day before. Mr. Scott, Mr. H. Robertson, and Mr. Byfield called in upon me in the evening. Finally, Alsager dines with me to-day, or rather takes the opportunity of our early hours to make a luncheon of cold beef before he dines out. At this moment (ten minutes to two) he is playing a game of marbles with Henry, after having been battledoreing with me. Indeed, on account of the badness of the weather, I have been exercising all the morning in-doors, in order to avoid, if possible, a relapse, which you will easily imagine is doubly intolerable to me now you are away. . . . .

To Thornton.

My dear, dear Boy,—I am quite happy to hear that you are getting on so much better, and hope that your natural

patience of temper is improving with your health, and that you always do as your mamma tells you, for she is one of the best of mammas, and would never tell you to do anything that was not for your own happiness and goodness. Pray tell me, in her next letter, what is the Greek for a horse, and a man, and a woman; a boy, a girl, the moon, and a flower; and as many others of your fifty words as mamma chooses to ask you. You ought now to learn the Greek for the sea, as you are in the habit of seeing it;—it is *thalassà*, and *kuma* is a wave;—a ship you know already. I hope you behave nicely to Anne Webbe, for little boys ought to do as much as they can for little girls, as they are to be men by and by; and men take care of the ladies, because the ladies are not so strong or capable of defending themselves. Your cousin Henry is with me at present, to keep me company while you are away. Marriott was with me at first, but he has gone to school; and in a few days Henry will go to school and Marriott come again, and so they will take it by turns. Your uncle John is well; so is your aunt Bess; and I am a good deal better. Are you not glad to hear that? I am sure you are, my dear boy, for you love papa dearly, and there is not a papa living who loves his children better than I do you and your brother John. Pray kiss him three times for me, and kiss your mamma six; and remember to try and walk as much as you can, for it will do you good, and dear mamma gets tired with carrying your little brother so much. Mr. Alsager has given me two nice new battledores and three shuttlecocks;—when you come home you shall have one of them, which is very little, and looks in the air like a butterfly. God bless you.—Your affectionate papa,

L. H.

To Marianne.

Surrey Gaol, 29th April, 1813.

. . . . My friends, in the meantime, are all attention to me. We had nobody here on Tuesday; but yesterday Mitchell and Alsager dined with us, and while we were

chattering over our wine, Brougham called in, and we had a delightful conversation on various things till six, when he was obliged to go. You wish me to tell you about these conversations; but it is difficult, and perhaps would not be altogether amusing, to bring together the scattered members of a miscellaneous discourse. We talked on all sorts of subjects—politics, historics, poets, orators, languages, music, painting, &c. &c. Upon this last point I can recollect one anecdote in it which may amuse you. We were speaking of the great difference there was in the fine arts between imitation and identity, and the unwarrantable nature of the latter as a substitute for it,—the difference, for instance, between imitating a crust of diamonds and stitching them on, between imitating a trumpet and making a trumpet absolutely blow, &c. &c.; and Brougham told us a sort of reverse exemplification, that, when he was in Germany, he was presented with a sort of private entertainment, in which a curtain was drawn from a sort of frame, and a number of living persons, gentlemen and ladies, *played a picture*, representing in petrified and continued attitudes some interesting subject, which the spectators were to take for a painting. Can you conceive anything more ridiculous? . . . .

Surrey Gaol, 4th May, 1813.

. . . . I have sent Thornton a nice little firm-standing inkstand, with which he must write his letters to me, and his other sort of letters that dear mamma teaches him; and his aunt Betsy makes him a present of a very nice book indeed about little boys that love their papas and mammas. Here is also a list of Greek words for him:—*thalassà*, the sea; *kuma*, a wave; *naus*, a ship, (I repeat these, that he may have all his words on the same subject together;) *thin*, the beach; *nautes* (pronounced *nautees*), a sailor; *ichthus* (*ikthoos*), a fish; *alieus* (*allyoos*), a fisherman; *sagène* (pronounced *sagheeny*, with a hard *g*), a net. There! I think he has enough to last him for some time. Pray tell him that I use his watering-pot, and that Marriott (who came to see us on Sunday) mended

his spade for him. I sent him off, in return, with my two little battledores and a couple of shuttlecocks, with which he danced away like a Mercury. He and I kept up, you must know, 1220 on Sunday morning, and were then only obliged to leave off by the entrance of a stranger, a Rev. Mr. Morris, who called to urge some kind things about a subscription. I shook my head at it as usual, though God knows my heart is shaken too upon that subject; but I am persuaded I am doing the best for the best of causes, and all other considerations must give way, as I have embarked in it, and am become of importance to the hands on board our shattered state vessel. I must not forget to tell you, lest you should think I am getting too serious, that happening to be standing with my back to the door when he came in, and guessing that it was one of my usual visitors, I said, putting out my left hand behind me, "I don't know who you are, but shake hands!" and was not a little alarmed at hearing a strange deep voice say to me, "You'll find an unknown face, sir, when you look round." However, he turned out to be a very cordial kind of man, and it passed off very well. . . . .

10*th May*, 1813.

My dearest Love,—I hope I have not put you to any awkwardness by my inconsiderate omission of the notes in Saturday's letter. I thought of them too late, and they were continually coming into my mind in the course of yesterday. The truth was, the bustle about me put them out of my head just as I was closing the letter. I have been to Dr. Gooch to-day respecting Thornton's bathing, and hope to send you word about it in my next. Dear little kind-hearted fellow! His mighty wishes, joined with yours, make my sleep sweeter. Your sky at Brighton cannot be finer than ours was here yesterday and this morning. This afternoon, while at dinner, we had a jovial shower, which has made all the flowers sparkle again;—the yellow globes are out and full, the Persian lilac hung with delicate bunches of blue, the daisies stand up quite swelling and proud, the broom has shot out a profusion of snowy

blossoms along its rods, and the left-hand rhododendron is throwing up the promise of a most splendid flower; the polyanthuses, primroses, and apple-blossoms are quite gone; but the garden, you may easily imagine, looks better than ever; and by the time you return you will be saluted with the roses and lilies. Tell Thornton I take care of his sunflower according to his wish, and water it with his little watering-pot: it has grown a great deal, and put forth six buds. I thank you heartily for your long letter; and what do you think I am going to do to show you my gratitude for it? Why, to annoy you; for—in short, not to hold you in suspense, Miss Edgeworth is coming to see me, and you, the Edgeworthian, are not in town! This is mortifying, is it not? But you would rather that I should be gratified than that neither of us should; and you know what pleasure it will give me to see a woman who is the delight and the blessing of the rising generation. . . . .

Surrey Gaol, 20th May, 1813.

. . . . I am at present trying a composition called ginger-beer, which has all the pleasantness and usefulness of soda-water without striking cold upon one. Should you like to make the experiment with me, say so, and I will send you down some bottles; or, indeed, that would be a very superfluous mode of proceeding, for I doubt not you could get plenty at Brighton. . . . .

Surrey Gaol, 25th May, 1813.

. . . . I have the pleasure to tell you that I have found a surprising change in myself for the better within the last forty-eight hours; it seems as if it were quite sudden, and perhaps it may not be the less lasting on that account, as I believe turns of this kind are not unusual in disorders that affect the spirits; the principal symptom which I have—and you may judge what an improvement it announces—is that instead of being able to be relieved for a short time from distressing fancies, it is only at long intervals, and then but

faintly (comparatively speaking), that they return to me. I know you will be delighted by this more than by any one thing I could tell you. . . . .

I have had Lord B. [Byron] here again. He came on Sunday, by himself, in a very frank, unceremonious manner, and knowing what I wanted for my poem, brought me the last new Travels in Italy, in two quarto volumes, of which he requests my acceptance, with the air of one who did not seem to think himself conferring the least obligation. This will please you. It strikes me that he and I shall become *friends*, literally and cordially speaking: there is something in the texture of his mind and feelings that seems to resemble mine to a thread ; I think we are cut out of the same piece, only a different wear may have altered our respective naps a little. Thomas Moore and he dine with me again in a few days ; and if you do not see the former when you return, perhaps you may his lordship, who will be pleased, I am sure, to know you and become acquainted :—a good domestic female, capable of loving one person sincerely and making sacrifices for him, is, I guess, not one of his everyday acquaintances. . . . .

Surrey Gaol, 29*th May*, 1813.

. . . . You must make allowances for the early vagaries of Lord B. Bess (who, by-the-by, you do not seem aware, is with me always as well as Henry) likes him very much. I am persuaded that his heart is an excellent one, and I am sure that his understanding is. By-the-by, since his visit with the books, people have been fairly conspiring against me with books. Mr. Cawthorne has sent me, with his respects, a new publication which I was longing to read—Hobhouse's *Travels in Albania and Turkey* (with Lord Byron), value five guineas. Mr. Hunter has sent me the *Life of Horne Tooke*, with *his* respects; Mr. Wakefield, his Account of Ireland, two volumes quarto; and the *Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (a great favourite) is coming to me from the Mr. Morris of whom I spoke to you. Mr. Hunter is binding it. These are presents

which I cannot, and, indeed, ought not, to resist. My own books are also coming back to me, and I assure you I look on them with additional pleasure from knowing the sacrifice I was ready to make of them. I have not put them all up again, for I had had the shelves taken from under the window, and the room (which has got *blinds* to the windows) looks so much better, that I shall not put them all up as they were before: all that I have done is to have the shelves that stood over the piano cut a little, and made to fit on the opposite side of the room, over the table, between the windows, but low down. The lower shelf is now fitted with quartos, the upper with a selection of all my favourite poets, and the bust of Homer surmounts them :—you may imagine how well it looks with the blinds down. My brother's picture is also come, and hung over the mantelpiece; and everything looks so new and compact, that what with the books, the bust, and the blinds, I am sure you would quite delight in the change. Do you not long to be sitting on the sofa with me, alone, with a green light, or rather twilight, about you? But I spare you, my dearest girl, till you return. . . . .

Surrey Gaol, 31*st May*, 1813.

. . . . But Haydon, I forgot to mention him, and yet I ought to tell you by all means that he was here yesterday morning before I was up, calling for his breakfast, and sending those laughs of his about the place that sound like the trumpets of Jericho, and threaten to have the same effect. He really said he *could* not wait, and by dint of perseverance obtained an egg, though Bess obstinately refused to make the tea before I appeared. He came and knocked at my door, but I told him it was a fine opportunity to acquire a little patience. I am afraid it is very wicked of me to tell this story to *you*. He and *Wilkie* dine with me next Sunday, at three. . . . .

Mr. Byfield, by-the-by, I have not seen for some time; his life, I believe, is a very busy one. My brother John is quite

hearty. I sent him a nosegay in a vial yesterday out of the garden, perfumed with sweetbriar and sparkling with heartsease. I think we shall give him a taste for ruralities, now we have got him into prison. There was no getting at his tenderness before, through that iron philosophy of his; but by the help of this additional metal coating, the other is melting away a little—as far as it ought. . . . .

Surrey Gaol, 5th June, 1813.

. . . . Mr. *Wilkie* dines with me to-morrow at three, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Scott; and I shall have quite a party on Friday next, as it is the last week Mr. Moore will be in town: there will be himself, Mr. Brougham, Dr. Gooch, Lord B., Mitchell, and Barnes; this, you will allow, is a company worth something, and you will be sorry that you cannot enjoy it. You will be much more sorry, however, to hear of another event, which is that Mr. Mitchell may be going away at the beginning of the week after, and to a much greater distance, and for a much longer time: he is to accompany Mr. Rose, jun., the new ambassador, to the Court of Sweden. I assure you it quite gave me a blow when he first told me, and he is evidently not a little affected himself at leaving his old companions. . . . .

Surrey Gaol, 7th June, 1813.

. . . . I can but write you a word, however, for I have got a room full of sudden visitors:—Mr. Alsager, Mr. H. Robertson, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Cawthorne, who has kept me some time looking over a catalogue of Italian books, a heap of which he is going to get me, merely for my study for a little while—purchases are not among my dreams at present; but he shows every readiness to help me with my poem [the *Story of Rimini*, the beginning of which had been shown to Cawthorne a little while before], and has already brought me a multitude of authors to which I wished to refer.

Surrey Gaol, 10*th June*, 1813.

. . . . You are at length coming *home;* and in that word all my joys and delights, you well know, are wrapped up. It is in a prison, to be sure, but our arms would make us a prison if we had not one already; and, in truth, the idea of a prison has become so familiar to me, or rather so little in my thoughts, except when I long to come to you (then indeed it is tormenting), that had I but decent health to enable my mind to enjoy what it really possesses, I am almost afraid I should put the prophecies of some of my friends into execution and fairly become attached to my new domesticity: however, I think of Hampstead, and *that* idea speedily vanishes. . . . .

My walking in the evening is not very systematic; I always do walk, but it is at irregular hours, and in general later than you seem to think good for me; but I have indulged myself in this way from a recollection of our evening walks at Penge, and from a hope that I may still enjoy them with you here. The prison garden is as well out in leaves as it can be; there are even pinks and roses in it; and with my arm round your waist I can fancy it absolutely pleasant by moonlight.

The prisoner's health still continued to give his friends some anxiety, and Mitchell suggested that he should contrive, in the Table-Talk in the *Examiner*, to introduce some kind of covert bulletin, which, unknown to the general reader, might contrive "to inform your absent friends of the state of your health." If the tedium of prison was relieved by personal affection, and by the excitement of unremitted political writing, it was also—and perhaps chiefly—enlivened by ceaseless and animated literary work. This was pursued both in public and in private.

Early in 1814 appeared a new edition of the *Feast of the Poets*, with new passages enlarging the list of

guests at Apollo's table, and modifying the opinions originally expressed generally in the sense of less harshness, or "less petulance," as the writer himself calls it. Out of this poem arose some private and friendly discussions on the subject of versification. One of the disputants was Mitchell, the letters to whom can no longer be recovered. In one dated February 23rd, 1814, he writes, "I have no doubt that you will make out a good *case*, when we meet, on the subject of versification. I shall be very happy to be made a convert. Do not take the trouble to copy out the hymn; for I expect to be in London by the beginning of next month, but cannot positively say when. Since I wrote to you last, I have read Lord Byron's *Bride of Abydos*, and he has thrown me into despair." It comes out in the course of this correspondence that Mitchell was among the translators of *Vert-Vert*, but he does not seem to have used his version. Another who joined in the controversy was Thomas Moore.

FROM THOMAS MOORE.

Mayfield Cottage, Monday, 31st February, 1814.

MY DEAR HUNT,—I was beginning to get very impatient at the delay of my promised copy, and even to think that you had perhaps *dismissed* me from *table*. I am glad, however, to find, that amidst all his after-thoughts, "*me* servavit Apollo," and that I am still his guest. The added passages are very beaut ; and I heartily wish you had given us more poetry and less criticism. I am as great a foe to critics as poor Hopner was to *connoisseurs* in painting. They expose a vast deal of absurdity, to be sure; and if it is of much importance to know *why* we are pleased or displeased, they tell us,—but I am quite certain that the watchful rigour they exercise in these days is, among other things, fatal to the little genius that's left us. If Wordsworth's absurdities had not been so rudely handled, we should have had more of his greatnesses;

and I think there is but little doubt that if Shakspeare had critics standing sentinels over every pun and conceit that wanted to escape, we should have lost many a beauty that has rushed out headlong with them. It is the *talent* of our present race of critics that makes them as pernicious as they are formidable. No man of sensibility or modesty (and these qualities generally accompany true genius) can write a line without having the dread of these persons before his eyes; and he who is obliged to *pick* his *steps* will never win the Olympic race. But it has always been the sign of an age of mediocrity. The great critics of Greece and Rome appeared after the sunset of genius, and (if I may descend to so low a comparison) were like the poor emigrants' cook, talking learnedly of the art of dressing when there was no more meat left to dress. I could write much more nonsense upon this subject, but I have not time even for nonsense. All I want is to win you over from those ministers of literary police, the critics. You are much too good for them: you can produce *text*, and must not waste your time in *comment*; there's but few of these fellows have the *creative* power. They are (as I've often thought and said) like able-bodied eunuchs: they can *knock down* a man, but they cannot *get one*.

Now, to tell you the truth, all the above half-serious and half-laughing rhapsody is in pure revenge for your attack upon my *dews* and *flowers*, which lovely things I shall never tread amongst again, without a disturbing recollection of the blight you have scattered over them; and it is curious enough that, in an epilogue I have just written for Mrs. Wilmot's forthcoming tragedy, two of the ingredients were actually those same dews and flowers, and I have accordingly dashed away the dews, but shall keep the flowers *for spite*.

I had great hopes that I should be *obliged* to go to town about business the beginning of March, in which case, it was my determination to keep more of my time for my own enjoyments, among the first of which, believe me, I rank my visits to you; but I fear I shall be disappointed of this "douce violence" I expected.

I am glad you found anything tolerable in the fifth number of the *Melodies*. I was by no means satisfied with them myself. We want *airs* sadly; and I could sing, with Cephalus, "*Aura* . . . . venias," &c. There's no writing well to bad music.

How Southey has fallen! a Pegasus like his turned into a cream-coloured horse for State occasions: it is quite melancholy.

By-the-by, to return to the critics, there was one poor man kill'ed off by them, whose ghost has lately appeared abroad in the [hiatus in MS.] Missionary. Have you seen it?—Yours, my dear Hunt, very faithfully,

THOMAS MOORE.

I give you the *first* proof of intimacy and friendship by writing illegibly to you.

FROM HENRY BROUGHAM.

Temple, Friday, May [1814].

MY DEAR SIR,—I have been, ever since I last wrote, locked up at the trial in Guildhall, which lasted near thirty hours, so I have seen no one who could put me in mind of Sir J. S.'s address, but I shall to-day.

I write now to suggest to you the vile plot of the daily papers. It is quite clear they are worked upon in some way. Not one of them has said one word of the hissing, groaning, &c., with which the P. is received wherever he goes. The *Morning Chronicle* is as dumb as the rest; or rather it is more prostitute, for it had the audacity to speak of the *applauses* he met with. From comparing different accounts, you will see they are a circular, evidently sent from Carlton House. And what is strange, the *Morning Post* has not ventured to insert the account of applause which the *Chronicle* has put in. A dinner was held on Wednesday, of the noblemen and others educated at Trinity College. Lord Lansdowne was in the chair, and the Duke of Glo'ster present. The King, was drunk with great applause; the Queen, *Princess of Wales*,

and rest of the family, with enthusiasm. The Prince *Regent* with *universal hissing*. Not one record of this in the papers.

I happen to know that he was in a complete alarm, and that the voice of the country had reached and frightened him.

But if this combination of the press is allowed to prevail, it will soon have a very contrary tendency. The *Morning Chronicle* is the more blameable for its silence through the whole discussion, because the Whigs have now openly sided against the Prince, on the question of the Princess of Wales.

Temple, Tuesday, 10th June, 1814.

My dear Sir,—. . . . The public voice is really fearful against the P. All the multitude to-day abused him as much as they cheered the Emperor; and they ascribed loudly to *his cowardice* the making the Emperor avoid the public *entrée*. Carlton House begins to take fright, and shows signs of capitulation; but I am sure the baseness of certain daily papers, in keeping such profound silence, is symptomatic of arts being practised to muzzle them.

Money may bribe some; but a little civility, I understand, has had its *equally corrupt* effects on those who ought to feel better.—Yours ever truly, H. B.

[*June 17th*, 1814.]

I hope you duly admire the courage of Carlton House, in setting up, at *this moment*, a candidate for Westminster, and that candidate Sheridan! as a personal protection.—Yours truly, H. B.

Temple, Thursday.

Dear Sir,—The *end* of the debate of Tuesday disclosed a scene which, I fear, the lateness of the hour prevents from being known, but as it was far more important than the whole question besides (at least in my view of it), I beg leave to mention it. I allude to the attack on the P. R. for refusing access to his petitioning and suffering people: this is one of

the worst symptoms of his government which we have yet seen, and I replied chiefly for the sake of marking it. It would have been good for the P. if he could have seen the *violence*, and even uproar, with which the attack was received. In the *Morning Chronicle* of to-day (Thursday), there is a very exact note of it, put in as the leading article.

Can there be a worse sign of the times than a sovereign refusing access to the just complaints of his subjects, and at the same time surrounding his person with foreign troops? Believe me, yours truly,

H. Brougham.

Brougham, 21st September, 1814.

My dear Sir,—I trust you will excuse me for the proposition which I am about to make, when you consider that you are in no degree committed by the communications that have passed, but on the contrary, that I refused to say a word to you on the subject, until no doubt remained with respect to the other party's disposition. The necessity of a very strict secrecy, at all events, will immediately strike you.

Soon after your sentence, a hint was conveyed to me that a very honest and amiable man, who had been on the jury, having never ceased since the trial to lament his joining in the verdict, was anxious to satisfy his mind, as far as was then possible, by paying the fine imposed, and it was said that the sum would be deposited in my hands in trust for that purpose. I did not feel authorized to propose this to you then, but I said that my opinion being very clear that you should avail yourself of it, if you found it suited your feelings and your convenience jointly, I should certainly have an eye towards the matter when the day of payment approached. My principal reason for the delay, was that you might avail yourself of the possibility of a remission, which events that have *not* happened would have produced.

The period of your liberation now drawing near, I felt it to be my duty to renew the negotiation, and I at the same time let your entire ignorance of what was going on be quite

distinctly known. I found the most decided and anxious desire continued on the part of the excellent man above mentioned—a feeling the more honourable because its duration clearly shows it not to be a momentary ebullition, or the result of what might be termed a compunctious visiting, but a sense of duty and principle. You have but to say the word, and the matter is settled; and that, in the course of post.

To dictate to you on this subject would be absurd, because much *must* depend on your individual feelings. To say what I should be inclined to do in your place, would for the same reason be fruitless. But I have well considered the matter; and if you will not allow me to ask your compliance as a favour, permit me at least to intreat that you may not hastily reject the proposal. If you will suffer me to indulge the idea that my opinion has any value in your eyes, I am sure of your favourable answer, for I think very decidedly upon this subject. But oblige me (before you make up your mind) so far as to consult with two persons beside your brother, and let Mrs. Hunt be one.

This country and weather is quite delicious, and I am living in the open air. I go to Paris next month for a fortnight.—Yours ever, H. B.

44, *Lincoln's-inn-fields, Thursday.**

My dear Sir,—I am desirous of having your opinion upon a point of much delicacy, and affecting very important interests. Begging you to consider this as strictly confidential (and only intended for yourself and your brother John), I shall proceed to mention, that so many hints, counsels, threats, waverings, and entreaties have lately reached me—and from so many and *such very different* quarters—that I am, though unwillingly, induced to listen to their purport, which is—to take some legal steps for stopping the scandalous libels

* The date of this letter is very doubtful. It may have been written as late as 1820; but that uncertainty, and the character of the subject, has induced the editor to leave it where it stands.

upon the Queen with which the Ministerial papers abound. My colleagues have all along agreed fully with me in feeling the greatest reluctance (I may say in resolving not) to proceed. And my principal reason has been the fear that enemies to the press might take advantage of our beginning, and might be eager (under the name of retaliation) to prosecute the liberal part of it; so that from the whole there might result a great practical diminution of the freedom of discussion. This has always been the principle on which I have acted in my own case, and it has prevented me again and again from taking notice of private libels, and has made me advise my friends to do the same. But I am not sure that I have the same right to act on this principle on behalf of another, unless that personage's interest were likely to be more injured than served by the proceedings in question.

Now, it strikes me that the best way of forming an estimate of the probable risk to which the respectable part of the press might be exposed by such proceedings, is to ask one or two journalists how they feel; and I think of consulting Messrs. Coulson [editor of the *Globe*], and Perry [editor of the *Morning Chronicle*], as well as yourself, and no one else. I have already spoken to Mr. Barnes [editor of *The Times*], and to no other, but he knows nothing of this letter. I trust you will excuse this trouble, and write me what occurs to your brother and yourself—unless he or you should find it more convenient to call, either at No. 5, Hill-street, any Sunday morning, or here, at my chambers, any evening.

OUT OF PRISON.—THE JOURNEY TO ITALY.

The prison doors opened on the 3rd of February, 1815, and Leigh Hunt went to reside at a house in Paddington, near his brother John, in a spot then closely bordering upon the fields. He paid a visit to Shelley at Marlow; next took up his abode for a time in the Vale of Health, in Hampstead; and afterwards returned more within the borders of London to live nearer work. He continued to edit the *Examiner*, writing its political articles, its literary reviews, and criticisms. And in the same period he published various other works;—amongst them *The Story of Rimini* (1816), *Foliage* (1818), *Ultra-crepidarius*, a satire upon Gifford (1819), *Hero and Leander*, and *Bacchus and Ariadne* in the same year, and the *Indicator*, which was commenced in October, 1819, and continued until nearly the departure for Italy, in 1821. The store of letters belonging to this period is, for various reasons, not perfect; although the correspondents were among the most intimate and eminent—the list including Shelley, Keats, and Byron. A portion of the materials were used for a book which Leigh Hunt published after his return from Italy. I have been unable to trace the representatives of Keats, who might have furnished me with the letters from my father to his friend.

A large proportion of the letters for this period that I have in hand are from literary persons, and turn upon literary subjects. Many correspondents refer to the publication of *Rimini*. Amongst these is Charles Lamb, who says: "The third canto is in particular my favourite: we congratulate you most sincerely on the trait of your prison fruit." "Aristophanes Mitchell" writes with great enthusiasm, as he did when the book first appeared. "It is," he says, "all the progress of a new mind bearing between Byron, Wordsworth, and Dryden,—catching from each, and winding itself up into a whole of its own."

Amid the heap I find a note from B. W. Procter, strongly remonstrating with Leigh Hunt for permitting the *Indicator* to deviate into the discussion of moral questions. The friend who tendered this admirable advice has apparently not been able to find the reply. Though none may have been sent; for it not unfrequently happened that friends who visited the house would receive oral answers to their letters. Another correspondent is William Hone, who writes from prison, thanking the Editor of the *Examiner* for support, particularly in the case of Eliza Fenning—a girl accused of poisoning her mistress's family, and hanged upon insufficient evidence,—although I have reason to believe that she was wholly innocent. Another correspondent is Don Diego Correa, on Spanish affairs. Another is a Sicilian patriot, writing upon questions of Sicily: and these are but examples of a class. Before proceeding to a more important section of the correspondence, I select, from the heterogeneous heap of letters belonging to the period, a few possessing an interest of their own.

Thursday, [1816?]

My dear Sir,—I have been shamefully long in thanking you for *Rimini*, but my hope was to have been able to read it with attention before I wrote to you on the subject. This hope is still unaccomplished; for, in addition to my party labours, I am far from being well, and have a pressure of private business upon me at this moment. The approach of Easter gives me the certainty of seeing you; and I should hardly have troubled you now, but for the interesting state of affairs, and the opportunity which it has given me of speaking out my mind at length upon the scandalous and unfeeling profligacy of *the Court*. I did so last night in a way to give much pain, I verily believe, to many persons—to the objects of attack certainly—but I find also great discontent among many of the Opposition, who, though they received every word I said with a full chorus of cheering, and though the cheers continued in peals for some moments after I sat down, yet I discovered in half an hour after that a few timid and trimming Tories, whose votes they had reckoned upon, took fright and went away, or at least *gave* my attack on the Court as *their* reason for going. The offence of lessening our minority was thus imputed to me; and, to hear them talk, you'd think I had kept them out of place! I care not even if I had done so—and as for a few votes, much better let wholesome truths be told to Parliament through the press (our grand and guardian power) to the people, than have a dozen men of our adversaries now and then vote with us. What I spoke I spoke deliberately, and with the design of its exciting a sensation throughout the country, whether it pleased the party or not. I thought it right to give you this explanation, in case the sort of clamour now raised reaches you, that the concluding sentences of my speech spoilt the division; for be assured, they who are the loudest *now* in saying so, were the loudest in cheering that peroration in their places.—Yours ever truly,

H. Brougham.

20093

To Francis Jeffrey.

13, *Lisson Grove North, near Paddington (London)*, 24*th July*, 1817.

Dear Sir,—I hope you have not set me down for a very ill-bred and insensible person; but what with delaying, and half expecting to receive your commands, and doubting whether my services might be requisite just now, I am afraid I must have appeared to make a very ill return for a ready kindness which I sincerely feel. At all events, I am in arrears with the *Edinburgh Review*, and should be obliged by your telling me in what way you would have me discharge them. I believe I mentioned to you, that there was a republication of Fairfax's *Tasso* coming forth, and that I should take up such a work for criticism with some confidence. Something interesting, I think, might be made of the subject of Italian poetry in general, of Tasso's personal character and life, and of the old contested point of comparison between him and Ariosto. Will you be kind enough to say whether you will like this, or whether you can suggest to me any other subject in the *belles lettres*. Could I take up Coleridge's *Poems* just collected and published? I do not know him personally, though I come from the same school. I dislike his tergiversation and his subtleties. [MS. illegible for a few lines.] *I admire* his genius, but not the manner in which, upon the whole, he has used it; I think him a martyr to indolence, to extremes, to disappointed enthusiasm, to a ready metaphysical faculty of over-refining and talking on any side of any subject; and from all this, perhaps I may say, that I am impartial, and should judge him fairly. But, perhaps, as he has made some direct observations on the *Edinburgh Review* in his *Literary Life* (just published also), he may require a more particular notice than a new contributor to that work could give him. There is a work announced, though I do not know when it will appear, which I should go to, with all my heart and soul,—*An Inquiry into Shakspeare's Life and Character, assisted by Researches into his Poems.* The editor is

no very great person (Nathan Drake); but the object of his work is a desideratum, and well worthy of exciting the eagerness both of critic and reader. I had once, indeed, a thought of an essay on that subject myself. Will you oblige me by your opinion, for—against [MS. illegible.]

13, *Lisson Grove*, 1817.

Dear Sir.—I trouble you with this, to say, that since my last, I have been more acquainted with this atrocious nonsense written about me in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and that nothing can be falser than what is said respecting my having asked and pestered Mr. Hazlitt to write an article upon my poem in the *Edinburgh Review*. I never breathed a syllable to him on the subject, as anybody who knows me would say for me at once, for I am reckoned, if anything, somewhat over fastidious and fantastic on such matters. I received last night a letter signed John Erchom Dalzell, Advocate, the author of which tells me at last that he is the writer of the article, and that he did not mean to attack my private character! He only attacked the bad principles I evince in my writings! You may conceive by this, that this letter is a strange mixture of affected airs and real paltering. I have written this evening to Edinburgh according to the signature, to ask whether Mr. Dalzell (if there is such a person) avows himself the author of the letter. But I am taking up your time with these matters. I merely wished, in the first instance, to state what I have mentioned above. Believe me, dear sir, most sincerely yours,

Leigh Hunt.

P.S.—You shall hear from me, according to promise, on the 10th. I did not know, when I received your letter, the full force of your kind and instant expression of contempt against the article to which you alluded; but I am happy to say that you are warranted in feeling it all. Indeed, I need not say so, after your instinctive sympathy and scorn.

FROM JOHN KEATS.

Margate, 10th May, 1817.

MY DEAR HUNT,—The little gentleman that sometimes lurks in a gossip's bowl ought to have come in very likeness of *coasted* crab and choked me outright for not answering your letter ere this. However, you must not suppose that I was in town to receive it. No; it followed me to the Isle of Wight, and I got it just as I was going to pack up for Margate, for reasons which you anon shall hear. On arriving at this treeless place, I wrote to my brother George, to request C. C. C. to do the thing you wot of respecting *Rimini*; and George tells me he has undertaken it with great pleasure: so I hope there has been an understanding between you for many proofs. C. C. C. is well acquainted with Bensley. Now why did you not send the key of your cupboard, which I know was full of papers? We would have locked them all in a trunk together with those you told me to destroy; which, indeed, I did not do for fear of demolishing receipts; there not being a more unpleasant thing in the world (saving a thousand and one other) than to pay a bill twice. Mind you old Woods—a very varmint shrouded in covetousness. And now I am upon a horrid subject—what a horrid one you were upon last Sunday, and well you handled it! The last *Examiner* was a battering-ram against Christianity, blasphemy, Tertullian, Erasmus, Sir Philip Sidney; and then the dreadful Patzelician and their expiation by blood; and do Christians shudder at the same thing in a newspaper which they attribute to their God in its most aggravated form? What is to be the end of this? I must mention Hazlitt's Southey. Oh! that he had left out the gray hairs! or that they had been in any other paper not concluding with such a thunderclap. That sentence, about making a page of the feelings of a whole life, appears to me like a whale's back in the sea of prose. I ought to have said a word on Shakspeare's Christianity. There are two, which I have not looked over with you, touching the thing, the one for, the

other against. That in favour is in *Measure for Measure*, Act. 2. sc. ii.

"*Isab.* Alas! alas!
Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And He, that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy."

That against is in *Twelfth Night*, Act 3. sc. ii.—

"*Maria.* For there is no Christian that means to be saved by believing rightly, can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness."

Before I come to the *Nymphs* I must get through all disagreeables. I went to the Isle of Wight, thought so much about poetry so long together, that I could not get to sleep at night; and, moreover, I know not how it was, I could not get wholesome food. By this means, in a week or so, I became not over capable in my upper stories, and set off pell-mell for Margate, at least 150 miles, because forsooth I fancied that I should like my old lodging here, and could continue to do without trees. Another thing, I was too much in solitude, and consequently was obliged to be in continual burning of thought as an only resource. However, Tom is with me at present, and we are very comfortable. We intend though to get among some trees. How have you got on among them? How are the *Nymphs?* I suppose they have led you a fine dance. Where are you now? in Judea, Cappadocia, or the parts of Lybia about Cyrene. Stranger from "Heaven, Hues and Prototypes," I wager you have given some new turns to the old saying, "Now the maid was fair and pleasant to look on," as well as made a little variation in "Once upon a time;" perhaps, too, you have rather varied, "Thus endeth the first lesson." I hope you have made a horseshoe business of "unsuperfluous lift," "faint bowers," and fibrous roots. I vow that I have been down in the mouth lately at this work. These last two days, however, I have felt more confident—I have asked myself so often why I should be a poet more than other men, seeing how great a thing it is, how great things

are to be gained by it—what a thing to be in the mouth of fame—that at last the idea has grown so monstrously beyond my seeming power of attainment that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phæton. Yet 'tis a disgrace to fail even in a huge attempt, and at this moment I drive the thought from me. I began my poem about a fortnight since, and have done some every day except travelling ones. Perhaps I may have done a good deal for the time, but it appears such a pin's point to me, that I will not copy any out. When I consider that so many of these pin points go to form a bodkin point (God send I end not my life with a bare bodkin in its modern sense), and that it requires a thousand bodkins to make a spear bright enough to throw any light to posterity—I see nothing but continual uphill journeying. Now, is there any thing more unpleasant (it may come among the thousand and one) than to be so journeying and miss the goal at last. But I intend to whistle all these cogitations into the sea, where I hope they will breed storms violent enough to block up all exit from Russia. Does Shelley go on telling strange stories of the deaths of kings? Tell him there are strange stories of the deaths of poets—some have died before they were conceived. "Now do you make that out, master Vellum." Does Mrs. S. cut bread and butter as neatly as ever? Tell her to procure some fatal scissors and cut the thread of life of all to-be-disappointed poets. Does Mrs. Hunt tear linen as straight as ever? Tell her to tear from the book of life all blank leaves. Remember me to them all—to Miss Kent and the little ones all. Your sincere friend,

JOHN KEATS *alias* JUNKETS.

You shall know where we move.

FROM THOMAS MITCHELL.

. . . I told you a foolish story some time ago about Bentham's proficiency in crowing like a cock. Miss Fox tells me I have mistaken the name. It was Beckford (Caliph

Vathek Beckford), and his daughter Lady Douglas, to whom the story belonged. I know not what compensation to make to the illustrious legislator, unless by mentioning to him a case of *analogous* punishment, which I dare say does not occur in his chapter on that subject. A comic poet (Cratinus, I believe) lashed the Athenians severely in a play which was called *Bapta*. The Athenians took their revenge by dipping the bard till he was suffocated.

To Joseph Severn.

Vale of Health, Hampstead,
8th March, 1821.

Dear Severn,—You have concluded, of course, that I have sent no letters to Rome, because I was aware of the effect they would have on Keats's mind; and this is the principal cause; for, besides what I have been told about letters in Italy, I remember his telling me upon one occasion that, in his sick moments, he never wished to receive another letter, or ever to see another face, however friendly. But still I should have written to you, had I not been almost at death's door myself. You will imagine how ill I have been, when you hear that I have but just begun writing again for the *Examiner* and *Indicator*, after an interval of several months, during which my flesh wasted from me with sickness and melancholy. Judge how often I thought of Keats, and with what feelings. Mr. Brown tells me he is comparatively calm now, or rather quite so. If he can bear to hear of us, pray tell him; but he knows it already, and can put it in better language than any man. I hear that he does not like to be told that he may get better; nor is it to be wondered at, considering his firm persuasion that he shall not survive. He can only regard it as a puerile thing, and an insinuation that he shall die. But if his persuasion should happen to be no longer so strong, or if he can now put up with attempts to console him, of what I have said a thousand times, and what I still (upon my honour) think always, that I have seen too many instances of recovery from apparently desperate

cases of consumption not to be in hope to the very last. If he still cannot bear this, tell him—tell that great poet and noble-hearted man—that we shall all bear his memory in the most precious part of our hearts, and that the world shall bow their heads to it, as our loves do. Or if this, again, will trouble his spirit, tell him that we shall never cease to remember and love him; and that, Christian or infidel, the most sceptical of us has faith enough in the high things that nature puts into our heads, to think all who are of one accord in mind or heart are journeying to one and the same place, and shall unite somewhere or other again, face to face, mutually conscious, mutually delighted. Tell him he is only before us on the road, as he is in everything else; or, whether you tell him the latter or no, tell him the former, and add that we shall never forget that he was so, and that we are coming after him. The tears are again in my eyes, and I must not afford to shed them. The next letter I write shall be more to yourself, and more refreshing to your spirits, which we are very sensible must have been greatly taxed. But whether your friend dies or not, it will not be among the least lofty of your recollections by-and-by that you helped to smooth the sick-bed of so fine a being. God bless you, dear Severn. Your sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM CHARLES LAMB.

Indifferent Wednesday. 1821.

DEAR HUNT,—There was a sort of side talk at Mr. Novello's about our spending *Good Friday* at Hampstead, but my sister has got so bad a cold, and we both want rest so much, that you shall excuse our putting off the visit some little time longer. Perhaps, after all, you know nothing of it.—Believe me, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Shelley's writings necessarily occupy a large and conspicuous share of the correspondence. The *Pro-*

metheus Unbound had appeared; it was the subject of severe attacks from the critics of the day, and of a proportionately vigorous defence in the *Examiner*, which became identified with Shelley and his reputation; and circumstances contributed to draw the friends still closer. Their antecedents had been very different. On many points their opinions were unlike; and not simply because Leigh Hunt was much the elder and more experienced man, since he paid to the great attainments and singular sagacity of his friend a very high respect. They differed in many of their natural qualities, Shelley being impetuous, little considerate of punctilios or forms where he thought right should dictate a summary and direct course; while Leigh Hunt was ultra-scrupulous in approaching others, and unquestionably inclined to be haunted, like Hamlet, with doubts the very opposite of the convictions upon which he conscientiously acted: so that, although he was firm and stedfast in his political course, he was always ready to entertain the opposite side of the question, and to make allowance for all persons whatsoever. In his personal affairs this facility for entertaining scruples and doubt, even after a resolve had been formed, and an exaggerated sense of his own incapacity for business, with a proportionately excessive estimate of other people's capacity, induced him frequently to rely upon advice and aid where it would have been more fortunate if he had trusted entirely to his own judgment. It is, of course, needless to say that I am not criticising the conduct which I am explaining. Retrospective criticism is almost invariably idle surplusage. I have only pointed to certain natural traits, because they help to explain the subsequent events. Strange as it may seem, Shelley certainly showed a greater aptitude for business than his older friend, and the fact was recog-

nised by Leigh Hunt with his usual emphasis. They resembled each other in dissenting from the received opinions of the day upon various subjects; and although their opinions upon those very topics differed from each other, they most heartily concurred in believing that the world was injured by the restraints placed upon discussion, by the substitution of conventional or dogmatic rules for logical and naturally-worked-out reasoning, and in taking the methods employed to sustain constituted authority very seriously to heart. I have certainly never met with any man who felt public affairs and the interests of mankind at large so deeply in his own personal sympathies as Leigh Hunt, with the single exception of Shelley, of whom I may say the same *e converso*. This necessarily drew them very powerfully towards each other.

In the period following his release from gaol, Leigh Hunt had to contend with accumulated difficulties, of a nature to call for special exertion. His whole life was one of pecuniary anxiety. His father was a refugee from America, the representative of a Barbados family, whose fortunes had declined; and although Isaac Hunt was a man who could at dangerous junctures put forth resolution and energy, it seems evident that he was inclined to repose on the traditions of his family, and on a vague general hopefulness, rather than active endeavour. Emerging from the Bluecoat School, Leigh Hunt found himself placed in the hereditary condition of an impoverished relative; and the employment sought for him was such as could be found, rather than such as suited either his natural disposition or his training, which had been exclusively scholastic. By the force of accidental circumstances, he became, as we have seen, a writer for the periodical press, in itself not a very certain mode of livelihood, and one

not calculated to develop regular business habits. In addition to these untoward circumstances, there was a peculiarity of his character—it was no affectation when he declared himself entirely incompetent to deal with the simplest question of arithmetic. The very commonest sum was a bewilderment to him. He learned addition in order that he might be fitted for his place in a public office. It was a born incapacity, similar to that of people who cannot distinguish the notes of music or the colours of the prism. Perpetually reproached with it, very conscious of his mistakes, he took his deficiency to heart, and, with the emphatic turn of his temperament, increased it by exaggerating his own estimate of it. Thus he regarded himself as a sort of idiot in the handling of figures; and he was consequently incapacitated for many subjects which he could handle very well when they were explained to him in another form. A secondary consequence was the habit, acquired very early, of trusting to others. His wife was clever in the special handling of arithmetic, a fact which he knew and admired. She had been brought up by a mother who was a thrifty housewife, and thus became, in all domestic mâtters, a business agent for a man who trusted her less like a husband than like a child.

About the y ar 1821, Mrs. Hunt fell into a confirmed state of ill-health, which terminated in confirmed disease of the lungs. This ultimately showed itself in the very formidable shape of hæmorrhage from the lungs. The spitting of blood was almost constant; sometimes it was so copious, that it seemed impossible to anticipate any but a fatal result. According to the views entertained at that day, Mrs. Hunt's medical attendants considered a warmer climate absolutely necessary. Her illness thus at once deprived her husband of his trusted agent

in domestic affairs, and appeared to force upon him imperatively a serious expense.

It has already been mentioned that Leigh Hunt was originally introduced to the family of Mrs. Kent in order to gratify the curiosity of her second daughter, whose admiration for the youthful author was confirmed on personal acquaintance into a strong attachment. Not very long after he had been accepted by the elder sister, a disagreement took place between the couple, and the engagement was broken off by mutual consent. To the youth the rupture occasioned great pain of mind; and, as we have already seen, he took an opportunity of a friendly correspondence with the mother to renew his suit. In fact, independently of his special admiration for the eldest daughter, he evidently desired to form an alliance with the family; and this desire went so far that he did not conceal it from the mother. The young lady's sister Elizabeth, however, used her best exertions to reconcile the separated lovers, with complete success. The engagement was renewed, and was not broken again through life. Congeniality of tastes and mutual esteem rendered the husband and the sister-in-law fast friends, frequently companions. Distance formed no barrier to such friendship, and it will be seen that letters to his sister-in-law formed a considerable part of Leigh Hunt's correspondence when he went abroad.

FROM MARY WOLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY.

5th March, 1817. *Marlow*, 1 *o'clock*.

MY DEAR HUNT,—Although you mistook me in thinking that I wished you to write about politics in your letters to me,—as such a thought was in fact far from me—yet I cannot help mentioning your last week's *Examiner*, as its boldness gave me extreme pleasure. I am very glad to find

that you wrote the leading article which I had doubted, as there was no significant hand. But though I speak of this, do not fear that you will be teased by *me* on these subjects when we enjoy your company at Marlow. When there, you shall never be serious when you wish to be merry; and have as many nuts to crack as there are words in the Petitions to Parliament for reform—a tremendous promise.

Have you never felt in your succession of nervous feelings one single disagreeable truism gain a painful possession of your mind, and keep it for some months? A year ago, I remember my private hours were all made bitter by reflections on the certainty of death; and now the flight of time has the same power over me. Everything passes, and one is hardly conscious of enjoying the present before it becomes the past. I was reading the other day the letters of Gibbon. He entreats Lord Sheffield to come with all his family to visit him at Lausanne, and dwells on the pleasure such a visit will occasion. There is a little gap in the date of his letters, and then he complains that his solitude is made more irksome by their having been there and departed. So will it be with us in a few months when you will all have left Marlow. But I will not indulge this gloomy feeling. The sun shines brightly, and we shall be very happy in our garden this summer. Affectionately yours,

MARINA.

FROM PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Great Marlow, 29th June, 1817.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I performed my promise, and arrived here the night after I set off. Everybody up to this minute has been and continues well. I ought to have written yesterday, for to-day, I know not how, I have so constant a pain in my side, and such a depression of strength and spirits, as to make my holding the pen whilst I write to you an almost intolerable exertion. This, you know, with me is transitory. Do not mention that I am unwell to your nephew; for the advocate

of a new system of diet is held bound to be invulnerable by disease, in the same manner as the sectaries of a new system of religion are held to be more moral than other people, or as a reformed parliament must at least be assumed as the remedy of all political evils. No one will change the diet, adopt the religion, or reform the parliament, else.

Well, I am very anxious to hear how you get on, and I entreat Marianne to excite Hunt not to delay a minute in writing the necessary letters, and in informing me of the result. Kings are only to be approached through their ministers; who indeed, as Marianne shall know to her cost if she don't take care, are responsible not only for all their commissions, but, a more dreadful responsibility, for all their *omissions*. And I know not who has a right to the title of king, if not, according to the Stoics, he to whom the King of Kings had delegated the prerogative of lord of the creation.

Let me know how Henry gets on, and make my best respects to your brother and Mrs. Hunt. Adieu. Always most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

To Percy Bysshe Shelley.

13, *Lisson Grove, North, Wednesday,*
27th August, 1817.

My dear Friend,—I intended writing to you to-morrow respecting the progress of my own affairs; but a paragraph which you will see in the *Chronicle* of to-day, under the head of "Chancery Court," makes me write at once to ask you how you would wish I should notice it,* or whether you would rather leave the notice entirely to myself. I think I can say I shall do it to your satisfaction either way. The form in which I would do it should be in a paragraph between brackets, immediately following the one in question. What

* Most probably the proceedings in Chancery to deprive Shelley of the custody of his children.

think you of your new counsellor, Robert Owen? He has made a great sensation in town, and will unlock myriads of lips.—With most affectionate remembrances to Marina, ever most heartily yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.*

Lyons, 22nd March, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Why did you not wake me that night before we left England, you and Marianne? I take this as rather an unkind piece of kindness in you; but which, in consideration of the six hundred miles between us, I forgive.

We have journeyed towards spring, that has been hastening to meet us from the South: and though our weather was at first abominable, we have now warm sunny days and soft winds, and a sky of deep azure, the most serene I ever saw. The heat in this city to-day is like that of London in the midst of summer. My spirits and health sympathize in the change. Indeed, before I left London, my spirits were as feeble as my health, and I had demands on them which I found it difficult to supply. I have read *Foliage:* with most of the poems I am already familiar. What a dlightf l poem the *Nymphs* is! It is truly *poetical*, in the intense and emphatic sense of the word. If six hundred miles were not between us, I should say what pity that *glib* was not omitted, and that the poem is not as faultless as it is beautiful. But, for fear I should *spoil* your next poem, I will not let slip a word upon the subject.

Give my love to Marianne and her sister, and tell Marianne she defrauded me of a kiss by not waking me when she went away, and that, as I have no better mode of conveying it, I must take the best, and ask you to pay the debt. When shall I see you again? Oh, that it might be in Italy! I confess

* *Letters from Italy.*

that the thought of how long we may be divided makes me very melancholy. Adieu, my dear friends. Write soon. Ever most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

To Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Lisson Grove North, 24th April, 1818.

Well, dear and illustrious vagabonds, and how do you find yourselves? We are all well here, and as musical and flowery as ever, notwithstanding Marianne's school two hours of a morning, which makes us all good boys and girls, and gets me up, and keeps all sorts of peevishness and noises down. We rejoiced at having your letters from Calais and Lyons, albeit Shelley found out the weak side of my friendliness in not waking him,—which is very savage and "young-eyed" of him. "On which Shelley looked meek, and taking forth a pen," &c. We thought you would have a roughish passage. Just as your first letter came, some one had horrified us, by telling us of a carriage which was met in the sea by a person coming over. It was not a present to Amphitrite, was it, to make interest at Court? It is delightful to hear of Shelley's improving health. The nearer he gets to the sun the better he will be, I doubt not; but don't let him be too much out in it and burn his wings. It was very good of Marina to write such a circumstantial letter from Lyons, and almost as good of Shelley (there's modesty for you) to think so much of the *Nymphs*. I hope to hear a thousand things of Italy, of the Alps, of Milano la Grande, Firenza la Bella, and Napoli la Gentile,—of the ladies, the country, the books, the operas, and of Raphael and Julio Romano, which reminds me that there is a place also called Rome. I mention Julio Romano rather than Michael Angelo; because in the prints I have seen from him there is a poetical something more to my taste than in the heavy-built dreams, neither natural nor supernatural, of Michael,—of whom, remember, nevertheless, I have seen nothing but in the same kind of translation, and who, I

dare say, must have done great things to get so great a reputation. If you go to Venice also, you must give me your impressions very particularly, as I am writing a comedy, mixed with quieter matter, the scene of which is laid there. I am in the second act, and am introducing the most beautiful of the Venetian airs. A gentleman has lent me a number of books about Venice, among which is a large one consisting of all the chief buildings and views in it, designed and engraved by Luca Carlevariis. I mention it in order that you may see I shall have some true ideas of the look of the place, and that in case you meet with the book, I may have the pleasure of your pointing out to me some of the spots in it, and so enjoy them in a manner along with you in spite of distance. When you get at all settled, pray, tell us how you live,—how you spend your days, generally speaking, one with another. *Ecce signum!* We are more orderly again than we used to be, as before mentioned. We also go often to the theatre. Marian and Bess are so bold, that on Friday evenings, when I am writing my theatrical, they sometimes go to the play together, and come home full of what they have seen, and make the best company in the world. We go to plays, to operas, and even to concerts, not forgetting a sort of conversazione at Lamb's, with whom, and Alsager, I have renewed the intercourse, with infinite delight, which sickness interrupted. One of the best consequences of this is that Lamb's writings are being collected for publication by Ollier, and are now, indeed, going through the press. So we have still proof-sheets fluttering about us. As to myself in particular, I walk out quite a buck again, with my blue frock coat and new hat, waving my (orange) lily hands. I also go to the office on Saturdays. At present I have made myself a nook to write in of a morning in the corner of the room where Raphael stood—as thus :—I have taken his place under the print of Shakspeare, in a chair with a table before me, put his bust on it, with a rose-tree at the side towards the door, and filled the outside of the window with geraniums, myrtle, daisies, heartsease, and a vase full of gay flowers ; so that, with the new spring green in the garden, my

books on the right, the picture of Jaques and the Stag under Milton, and two plaster-cast vases, which ——— has just sent me, on each side of the Mercury on the piano, I have nothing but sights of beauty, genius, and morality all about me. (Here Shelley says, with lit-up eyes and a smile, "Oh! Hunt"—Clare rubs her hands and twinkles her eyes; and Marina looks placid and sly.) ——— admired my bower the other evening, and shrieked at the sight of the heartsease. I overtook him the other day walking through the flowery part of Covent Garden Market, and peering with infinite complacency on each side of him. He has been to tea here several times, and the other night met Lamb and his sister. He tells me to say that he is alive, and has as many prejudices as usual. He means to write. Peacock went with us to the play just after you left us, and we also met him a few nights afterwards at the opera; but he has since been at Marlow, and we have neither seen nor heard of him. Mr. Godwin, I hear, is well. I am going to send him Drake's books about Shakspeare, which Lamb tells me he wishes to see. Adieu. I leave the rest of the paper for Marianne. "What do you say to Mr. Shelley, Thornton?"—"My love, and I shall be glad if he's happy." Thornton is now reading almost all day, nestled up in an arm chair. "What shall I say for you, John?" "Why, why, *his* love; no, don't say *his* love:—say my love, and I shall be glad if he has got a great stone in his hand." (Here he, and Thornton, and Mary burst into a loud fit of laughter.) "What shall I say for you, Mary?" "Say" (hardly able to speak for laughter) "that I shall be glad if he's love." Here, in comes Mollibincke, just *apropos*, with little Percy in her arms, who is looking as grave and intent as if he had all the ideas of his namesake in his head. But I must have done. Love to all, and from all; and God bless you! What a nice, good, kind-tempered girl Marina was during the bustle of going away! When you write to Lord Byron, pray, remember me particularly to him. Oh! for some of your Italian sunshine, and even some of our old clouds, to make a proper April with; for we have had nothing hitherto

but dust and east winds. The Nephelíads have treated me with too distant a respect. What are you writing, Shelley and Marina? Tell me everything; but again, again, I must have done. Horace Smith is married, and has sent me a very nice letter on the occasion. We are going to have a house-warming with him in a day or two at his father's villa. Well, take care of the books and other matters. Shelley's book is going off; and *Frankenstein* is in request as usual.

24th April.

Marianne after all says she will write a letter by herself—there's an epistolatory determination for you; so I sit down to have a little more chat. And now I must thank you for your letter from Milan which saluted us last night on our return from the play; and I must inform you also, that though somewhat smitten at finding you arrived so soon, and though my letter (above) is dated by mistake 24th, my conscience was saved in other respects, for it was really written on Tuesday, the 21st. It is exceedingly pleasant to have so good an account of Italy, especially as on the same day I received a book from a well-meaning, though not a very knowing sort of person, who gives a very different one. You shall hear all about the plays and operas in a little bundle of slips from the *Examiner*, which I mean to poke in a corner of Peacock's packet, when I hear it is ready; and there shall also be a selection of such politicals as I think have anything in them. You tell me, Marina, to write long letters. Have I not begun like a good boy? Be a good girl in return, and write me as long ones, even if Shelley takes too long siestas to halve them for you. God bless him, and bless you all.

To Mary Shelley.

4th August.

My dear Mary,—I sit down to write to you with every intention of saying a great deal, if my wits will bear me out. In the first place, you know mine are to be mere letters of chit-chat: more I cannot even aim at. How are you all?

Is Mr. Shelley better? I am sorry to hear no better accounts of him; better health for him seemed the only thing to make your absence for so long a time and at such a distance at all comfortable. We miss you much; and often, as you may suppose, talk of you all. The summer is a remarkably fine one, extremely warm, and vegetation in high luxuriance. We have moved into a new house, which Mr. Hunt has taken for some years, with the power of leaving it at the end of the fourth year by paying 20*l.*; but we all, I think, know his dislike to change (which, by-the-by, does not extend to houses). Nevertheless, if we say four, the probability is we shall stay seven years, and spend many a day together in it. It is in the New Road between Baker Street and Gloucester Place, parallel with Portman Square (8, York Buildings). Mr. Hunt has had his portrait taken in chalk, as large as life, half-length, by Mr. Wildman, Thornton's drawing-master. It is one of the most astonishing likenesses that ever was seen; you would almost think it was going to speak to you; and the execution, as a drawing, equals the likeness.

Mr. Coulson we have not seen for some time; Mr. Keats is gone to Scotland. You will be sorry to hear poor Miss Lamb is ill again: what a sad thing it is for such an admirable woman. I don't know how it is, but those things seem to fall on the most delightful and amiable of mankind—I don't mean her particular complaint, but distress and uneasiness in general.

If you send any parcel over, will you send some Italian chalk for drawing, black and white: Thornton would be so much obliged to you; for it is so very difficult to get good here. How is it, Mr. Shelley does not write? Indeed, *you* write very shabby letters. Tell us a little more of yourselves. I will leave Mr. Hunt a little room.—Yours affectionately,

M. A. HUNT.

4th August.

MY DEAR MR. SHELLEY,—Many happy returns of the day. May you be happier next year than last. M. H.

Very well, madam: "a little room!" But I shall turn it into a large one, by making my letters little, as all the devils got into Pandæmonium by shrinking themselves. And, first, to tell you my dear friends, why Marianne's letter has been so long delayed after the date. You must know, first of all, that it waited for a parcel of Mr. Ollier's, then it struck us that Mr. Wildman might as well make a copy of *my head, which accordingly comes to ask you how you do?* then Mr. Ollier waited for us; then, I believe, he sent off his letter before his parcel; then we all think we are waiting for each other, and then we all feel wonder and remorse, and Shelley spares his dilatory friend in behalf of his late good epistolatory behaviour, not to mention his *present* (in two senses). Can you manage to carry the head about with you, like the pot of Basil in Boccaccio? It is as large as life, you see, though the picture itself is not so large as the original, which includes part of the body. It is also very spiritedly done, and reckoned a great likeness, though I must tell you, in greater justice to the artist, that it is not so finely wrought up as the original, albeit he himself thinks the contrary. (Should the box still come after the letter, you will conclude that the picture is travelling in it. I am sorry to find there is nothing miraculous in my head, or it would naturally have saved us the trouble of packing, and gone to the land of Loretto the shortest way.) And now, WHO WILL SEND US A HEAD OR HEADS IN RETURN DRAWN BY SOME ITALIAN? Pray think of that, and show for once that you have some respect for the Mosaic institution, which enjoins the payment of limb for limb. I wonder people never send portraits of *hands* to each other, as well as *heads*. The thought has just struck me. It is a very cordial member; and if any one sets me the example, I'll follow it. Think of that also. And now, thank ye heartily, Marina, for your last letter; and thank ye, Shelley, for yours; and thank ye, Clare, for your Venetian music, which I think very natural and dansatory indeed. Little Mary fell into the measure of it directly, and danced herself about the room with all sorts of clappings

of hands and sidelong nods. You must know, they say she grows handsome and finelier-shaped every day, which I hear, of course, with the old paternal scepticism. (Hallo, I'm out of Pandæmonism.) Tell us all about the little ones, and, more than all, about the large ones. Shelley, indeed (by the way, do you know he has deviated into *three* of these "feminine" letter marks himself?) has given a very nice full account of the way in which you spend your time. So he won't tell me about the mountains, and talks of my microscopic eyes! Well, tell him, I think him great, nevertheless. I envy you your vines and fireflies, certainly; but with regard to climate and summer, Marianne has told you we have had a remarkable season, and it remains so still. It is said there has not been such a one for forty years. I certainly remember nothing like it myself, for continuance—real uninterrupted southern continuance. Day after day, day after day, there is nothing but sunshine and blue sky, with, once and away, a good large drenching rain, that seems to come purely to lay the dust, and water the vegetation. Never was a finer time for the theories of your humble servant the Bee. I long to hear of Rome, and Naples, and the paintings, &c. &c.; particularly of the ladies and the out-of-door amusements. Shelley will become a connoisseur in the best part of paintings—the sentiment and imagination. Pray tell me, in special, of Raphael's pictures; of Cupid and Psyche at the Chigi Palace; of his Poetry and Parnassus; of his Galatea; of his picture where the officiating deacon (a sceptic) is blushing at the sight of a miraculous cross on the post; of the School of Athens, with all the philosophers and Shelleyites of old in it; of the sculpture; and of what you see of Julio Romano's. Ariosto, I must own, though reluctantly, does not answer the expectations formed of him by a reader accustomed to Shakspeare's inexhaustible thinking and Spenser's imagination. He seems wordy and superficial in the comparison. But he has a vein of fine natural poetry in him, nevertheless, and delightful spirits; and I have no doubt, the idiomatic charm they speak of is very great to his

countrymen, as foreigners can even relish it. Ariosto always seems to me one of nature's gentlemen—if you understand that mixture of the aboriginal and sophisticated. But I must own that I prefer his predecessor, Bojardo, for general entertainment, and Pulci, for perfect freedom and the greater flesh-and-blood variety in his knights; and, I think, by the way, that an acquaintance with the two poets diminishes still further our special admiration of Ariosto, who has succeeded so much, perhaps, with his countrymen, because he has hit a more universal intelligibility of style and *address* —a great thing, certainly; but then it is the means, and not the end. I think you would like Ariosto's minor poems and satires. But Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Dante, are the morning, noon, and night of the great Italian day; or, rather, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, are the night, morning, and noon. "And the evening and the morning were the first day." Shelley told me once he would read Boccaccio. Pray make him do so now, especially the tales of the Falcon; of the Pot of Basil; of the king who came to kiss the young girl that was sick for love of him; and of the lover who returned and found his mistress married on account of false reports of him, and who coming in upon her at night-time, and begging her to let him lie down a little by her side, without disturbing her husband, quietly broke his heart there. I have not gone on with my Coventry story yet, though I most assuredly mean to do so; but it must wait for this drama of mine: and this drama, you must know, in a great Shelleian fit, I have turned from a comedy to a tragedy, or rather serious play, and made the famous Cid the subject of it, moved thereto, not by any sympathies or emulations with Master Corneille, but by an account of his Spanish original, Don Evillen de Castro, in Lord Holland's Lives of him and Lopé. The Cid, you know, revenges a blow given to his old father. I mean to make him punish the giver of it, but yet be above the feeling of the revenge *as* revenge. How will Shelley say? "That's admirable!" . . . . I am delighted to hear that Shelley is on the subject he mentions.

It completely suits him, being at once logical, philosophical, poetical, and mysterious. I shall hail his Homer's *Hymns*, too, to begin the year with. I can tell him that his name gets more known and respected every day, in *spite* of the *Quarterly Reviewers*, who have attacked him, and me, and Hazlitt (though not Shelley by name), in their old, false, furious, and recoiling way. The candid part of their friends are, I believe, really ashamed of them,—one or two, I know, are. They surely never felt any real dignity or contempt for meanness themselves, or they would avoid extravagances which enable one to despise them. Hazlitt has written a masterly character of Gifford, much more coolly done than these things of his in general; and *this* single circumstance shows what sort of feelings the poor creature generates. I have noticed him only in passing, truly and unaffectedly feeling too much scorn, as you may imagine; but I think I can say something further after all, as far as others are concerned, whose contempt, perhaps, is not close at hand enough to be effective. There is the allusion that Shelley expected to the book at the Chartreuse, but they only quote the word ἄθεος; φιλάνθρωπος they chose to let alone. But perhaps you have seen or heard of all this. Marianne has told you of our new house. It is very comfortable, with the single exception of its looking out upon houses, back and front; but I have a study to myself, and fill the windows with flowers, in the freshness of which I am now writing this letter *on Shelley's birthday*, which God grant may return many and many a time, with all the blessings for him and his that can be wished them by their most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

To. P. B. AND M. W. SHELLEY.

8, *York Buildings, New Road, Thursday,*
12th November, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—So I find, all of a sudden, why it is you do not write to me. I sent my last letter thoughtlessly,

by Mr. Ollier's box, and they tell me, to my great chagrin, that perhaps it may not have reached you yet. I had no idea of this or I should have written to you again long before; and so I should at all events, had I not been daily devoured with printers' devils, and in expectation besides of hearing from yourselves. So Shelley has been hanging his head, I fear, and saying, "Hunt is too careless," and Marina has been looking sideways, and thinking it not worth speaking about; and First Lady has consigned me over to the common character of mankind. Well, I shall sit like Patience in a post-office, and wait for one of the kindest letters in the world. What think you of my modesty as well as industry? I have been writing a *Pocket-Book*. The booksellers tell me it will do exceedingly well; and Shelley will be at once pleased and surprised to hear that it is my own property, and I mean to keep it so. It is entitled the *Literary Pocket-Book*, or companion for the lover of art and nature, and contains a long calendar of the months, written by myself, interspersed with quotations from dead and *living* poets. Lists of men of original genius from the earliest times to the present, of living authors of *Europe*, artists and musicians, extracts from Bacon and others, and original poetry, among which I have taken the liberty ("Hunt is too ceremonious sometimes") of putting Marianne's *Dream* to the great delight of said Marianne, not to mention its various MS. readers. The names are not mentioned in *this* department of the book; but Shelley will be in good company,—at least, I may speak for Keats, and Shelley will speak for some one else. I forgot, in my box letter, to allude to the criticism in the *Quarterly Review* upon Marina's book. Upon the whole, I congratulate her on it. They have now been abusing Keats at a furious rate ever since their abuse of Shelley, and it is pleasant, on many accounts, to see how the public disgust is increasing against them every day. I made no answer to Gifford myself, partly out of contempt, partly (I must really say) out of something bordering on a loathing kind of pity, and partly for the sake of setting an example always praised, but seldom

or ever practised. I therefore instinctively paid a friend like Shelley the compliment of feeling for *him*, as I felt for myself; but there are limits in forbearance, especially when the task is not one of self-revenge, but of friendship; and as they have sent for his poem from Ollier's to criticise it, I mean, if they (Gifford or others) do not take warning, to buckle on my old rusty armour, and give them such a carbonado as I know I am able to give, and they most capable of feeling. I hope Ollier has told you that Shelley's book sells more and more. God bless you all, and never think angrily or doubtingly of one who is just as sensitive to the opinion of those dear to him as he despises that of the reviewers. Most affectionately yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

Marianne's ill—but sends very best love. Bess requests to be put in by all means. Hogg, Keats, Novello, H. Robertson, and Coulson send their remembrances—Hogg especial ones. I am now resuming my drama; and am going to propose to Constable, that when I have done it I will undertake specimens of the Italian poets from Dante to Metastasio.

To MARY SHELLEY.

8, *York Buildings, New Road,*
9th March, 1819.

MARINA MIA,—I should have written much sooner, but I have been in a world of doubt and difficulties. You know the difficulties which I foolishly suffered to remain upon me, when Shelley did that noble action. They have latterly come pelting upon me, and, thank God, the storm is pretty well over. What pleases me much, however, is, that these are old matters that have been long coming, not new ones; and that both my economy and my resources have been increasing meantime. You must know I have been writing lately like a dragon (nor is the simile so unlike as it seems, if we are to believe Emanuel Swedenborg, who says that the devils have plays acted before them, and that he saw critical dragons sitting in the pit). I hope the parcel with

the *Pocket-Books* has arrived by this time. I finished my tragedy the week before last; I am now deep in translating passages out of the Greek plays to make up the little volume, commencing with Hero and Leander. What divine writers those Greek tragedians are! I should quarrel more with the unjust and shocking superstition about history, upon which their writings are founded, were they not perpetually yearning after every species of beauty, moral and physical; and were there not even a lurking impatience and irreligion against their own plots, which contain something more truly pious and worshipful to the "Spirit of Intellectual Beauty" than all the frightened compromises with bigotry in the world. "But what, Hunt, of Italy?" Oh, you see, I delay speaking of Italy. I cannot come; I wish to God I could; and were Shelley and you to be ill, so as to want me to help comfort you, I feel almost certain that I would; but it is next to impossible. My brother John has had for some months an idea of retiring into the country, in order that his sons might be better furnished with means for entering into life; and just as I wrote my last letter, he had finally determined upon it. He and my other brothers dine with me to-morrow, previously to his departure, which takes place in a couple of weeks; and then it will be more than ever necessary that I should be every Saturday at office, where my nephew Henry takes his place. Henry is a very nice ingenuous lad, who, with his father's staider excellencies, has more imagination. He is going to live with Coulson, which appears to me an excellent arrangement. The other day he surprised a company at his father's with starting earnestly into conversation, his face all on fire, and making a zealous defence of Shelley, whom some foolish person attacked. When he had done, he apologized for being so loud and abrupt, but "my uncle," said he, "admires and loves Mr. Shelley, and this alone should excuse me;" upon which his father added with evident delight, "My dear boy, you could not have done better." Now all this, I conceive, is good and fine. I think it was Coulson who told me. Coulson is a good deal here; so are

Hogg and Peacock, besides the Novellos, and a very nice couple, friends of theirs, a Mr. and Mrs. Gliddon. We had a most glorious twelfth-night, with *tea in the study at half-past six* (in the morning), and the women all sparkling to the last. The Lambs also we see at short intervals, and Alsager, and Hazlitt, who has just published a most bitter γνῶθι σεαυτὸν letter to Gifford, which said Gifford, by-the-by, Shelley may be assured is his traducer, and not Southey. Southey is an honest man after a fashion, and does not tell wilful lies. I have also made a very pleasant acquaintance in a young man of the name of Procter, who was a little boy at Harrow when Lord Byron was there, and who wrote the verses in the *Pocket-Book* signed "P. R." Albeit bred up in different notions, he is a great admirer of Shelley's book, and has a fund of goodness and good taste in general. Young Curran, too, has been here three or four times; and there is a distant sort of endearment between me and the Lapwing. I beg pardon. Somebody told Mr. Godwin the other day, that I said Milton was an atheist. So he wrote me a very polite letter to know what grounds I had for calling him so; and I answered and said, None,—having no grounds, and never having so called him. All that I had said was, that Milton, latterly, never went to any place of worship, or had any worship in his house; and it turned out that I could not prove even this, having confused my memory betwixt some words in the proving of his will, and an assertion of Joland's to that purpose. Upon which Godwin sent me a very pleasant answer, stating that he thought this would be the amount of the matter, and giving me a specimen of the way in which these things sometimes get into books. Hayley had said in his Life of Milton, that Bacon was deformed; so Godwin (who tells me that he always makes a point of plaguing people on these subjects) wrote to him to know his authority; upon which Hayley returned for answer, that he had no authority, but that he conceived "he must have mistaken Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, for the Viscount St. Albans:" a pretty difference, between the crabbed politician, with a body as

crooked as his soul, and the Hesperus of modern philosophy. Hogg and Peacock generally live here ever Sunday, when the former is not on the circuit; and we pass very pleasant afternoons, talking of mythology, and the Greeks, and our old friends. Hogg, I think, has a good heart as well as wit. You have heard, of course, of Peacock's appointment in the India House; we joke him upon his new oriental grandeur, his Brahminical learning, and his inevitable tendencies to be one of the corrupt, upon which he seems to apprehend Shelleian objurgation. It is an honour to him that "prosperity" sits on him well. He is very pleasant and hospitable. He has told you, I suppose, that Mr. —— called on him the other day, and invited him and Hogg to dinner with his wife at Kensington. Peacock asked me if I had any objection to meet them at his lodgings to dinner. I said I had, because as I was not an old acquaintance of theirs, I could avoid their company, and would never meet a person who would not meet Shelley; but Hogg says they are now very desirous of seeing him, and so my grandeur relented, and I shall shortly, perhaps, have to give you an account of our confronting. Pray tell me in your next (for you will write again, nymph of the sidelong looks, now I have done my epistolatory duty) how you all are, and whether Shelley's Italian doctor has done him any good. Didn't you go to Sicily while you were in the neighbourhood—the land of Theocritus, and Proserpine, and Polyphemus? I do not scruple to put the one-eyed giant in such company, because he always appears to me a pathetic rather than a monstrous person, though his disappointed sympathies at last made him cruel. What do you think of this Polypheme theory of mine? I have been for a long time in a state of remorse for not writing; and yet —— But I will not make bad excuses; for on such an occasion they *must* be bad. You shall see how I will mend. There is not a day passes over my head, I assure you, but what I think of Italy, and not for its native productions, but its foreign. Pray tell me how you are, and what you do, and where you go, and what you intend. Shelley says he should

like to be walking about with me in the Hampstead fields. It is what I repeat to myself every day. If he were here, I should walk as much again as I do. If he does not speedily quite restore his health, I sometimes think that my yearnings on this point may bring you over a little sooner than you anticipated. I am sure that if he lived at Kilburn or at some such place in the neighbourhood, I should walk there and back every day. God bless you. I am writing upon a little green portfolio which you left in Russell Street, and which I have usurped the use of ever since. Remembrance to Clare. Marianne is writing out my tragedy, and so I have got Betsy Kent to write you a little more chit-chat. Ever most sincerely and affectionately,

LEIGH HUNT.

* * *

TO PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

York Buildings, July, 1819.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—My letter would have come off to you before I received yours, had I not been laid prostrate by a bilious fever, from which I am now recovering, and which, I think, has left me in a condition to get better than I was before, if I take care and take exercise, which with me are nearly the same thing. I had received the news of your misfortune, and thought of all which you and Mary must suffer. Marianne, I assure you, wept hearty tears of sympathy. He was a fine little fellow, was William; and for my part I cannot conceive that the young intellectual spirit which sat thinking out of his eye, and seemed to comprehend so much in his smile, can perish like the house it inhabited. I do not know that a soul is born with us; but we seem, to me, to *attain* to a soul, some later, some earlier; and when we have got that, there is a look in our eye, a sympathy in our cheerfulness, and a yearning and grave beauty in our thoughtfulness that seems to say, "Our mortal dress may fall off when it will; our trunk and our leaves may go; we have shot up our blossom into an immortal air." This is poetry, you will

say, and not argument: but then there comes upon me another fancy, which would fain persuade me that poetry is the argument of a higher sphere. Do you smile at me? Do you, too, Marina, smile at me? Well, then, I have done something at any rate. My dear friends, I affront your understandings and feelings with none of the ordinary topics of consolation. We must all weep on these occasions, and it is better for the kindly fountains within us that we should. May you weep quietly, but not long; and may the calmest and most affectionate spirit that comes out of the contemplation of great things and the love of all, lay his most blessed hand upon you. I fear this looks a little like declamation; and yet I know that he would be a very mistaken critic who should tell me that it was so.

I can do nothing with my tragedy—at least, not at present: I may do something when the new management at Drury Lane is settled, provided Kean likes it on perusal. He has rejected it, in a manner, at present, without perusing; for in my letter to him I unfortunately said that there were *two* characters in it, either of which, it was thought, would suit him; and it turned out just afterwards that he had a mortal antipathy to having any second Richard in the field. He returned me a very polite answer, in which he said that his hands were full. I then sent to Covent Garden; and here, it seems, the manager lives in the house of a bad dramatist, to whom he is under obligations, and who settles the destiny of all new comers. I had the honour to be rejected. You cannot suppose, of course, that I think my tragedy worse than those which are received. I know it to be a great deal better: but between ourselves, I think I have hurt it for publication, by keeping in mind its destination for the stage. At all events, I shall keep it myself, in hopes of future performance. What I most regret is the waste of my time, which I might have turned to more lucrative account; but I did my best, and most industrious. The two little poems (*Hero and Leander*, and *Bacchus and Ariadne*) are out; and if Ollier does not bestir himself, I will make up a little packet next week, with these

and one or two other things in it. Perhaps I had better do so at once, if Peacock does not send. Is it possible that you have never received even Ollier's first packet yet, with the portrait in it, which I thought, in my egotism, was to gratify you so? I guess as much, by your silence about it. You will see in the *Examiner* what I have said about your lovely poem of *Rosalind and Helen*, which is a great favourite of mine. I was rejoiced to find also that Charles Lamb was full of it. Your reputation is certainly rising greatly in your native country, in spite of its honest Promethean chains; and I have no doubt it will be universally recognized on its proper eminence. I long, by-the-by, to see Prometheus himself. I have no doubt you have handled his "wearied virtue" nobly. It is curious, but I had thought a little while ago of writing a poem myself, entitled *Prometheus Throned;* in which I intended to have described him as having lately taken possession of Jupiter's seat. But the subject, on every account, is in better hands. I am rather the son of one of Atlas's daughters, than of Atlas himself. I am glad you like the specimen of the *Pocket-Book*. As my old chat refreshes you, I think myself bound just now to write often;—I shall despatch another letter next week addressed to Mary, which I hope will induce her to oblige me with one of those gigantic paragraphs which she entitles a letter. Won't you write to me frequently, too, if I write frequently? God bless you, my dear, dear friends, and take care of your health and spirits, if it be only for the sake of your affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

TO MARY SHELLEY.

8, *York Buildings, New Road,*
July, 1819.

MY DEAR MARY,—I was just about to write to you, as you will see by my letter to Shelley, when I received yours. I need not say how it grieves me to see you so dispirited. Not that I wonder at it under such sufferings; but I know,

at least I have often suspected, that you have a tendency, partly constitutional perhaps, and partly owing to the turn of your philosophy, to look over-intensely at the dark side of human things; and they must present double dreariness through such tears as you are now shedding. Pray consent to take care of your health, as the ground of comfort; and cultivate your laurels on the strength of it. I wish you would strike your pen into some genial subject (more obviously so than your last), and bring up a fountain of gentle tears for us. That exquisite passage about the cottagers shows what you could do. Besides, to tell you the truth, I want an opportunity of speaking about your writings, having delayed criticising your novel so long for want of well knowing how to handle it, that I know not what to be at in order to show you what I really feel. This is the whole mystery, I assure you—if ever you have a thought about it—and not my old thief of a friend, Delay, however he might have insis ed on having a hand in the matter, too. Then, because I do not criticise the work of this friend, I do not criticise the works of this or that acquaintance; and so I get into twenty dilemmas, which none but a journalist can fully experience, and none but a very true friend, very clever to boot, can afford to pardon. And so, madam, I fall in imagination at your feet, and kiss the hands to your very illustrious signorship, hoping they will soon furnish me with an opportunity of redeeming my character. Imagine that in this sheet of paper, which your eyes are now engaged upon, you are perusing my petitioning face—(don't take your hand from my chin)—I am sure there is enough sincerity in it to obtain my pardon, and, I hope, enough gaiety and good humour to bring out a few little smiles from your own. I wish in truth I knew how to amuse you just now, and that I were in Italy to try. I would walk about with Shelley wherever he pleased, having resumed my good old habits that way; I should be merry or quiet, chat, read, or impudently play and sing you Italian airs all the evening. Pray, is Shelley still of opinion that a man ought to have time to write an essay between every note in *Sul margine*

d'un rio? I have lent somebody that beautiful air of Martin's he was so fond of, and cannot recollect whom; so that I often miss it, with many internal execrations against the unknown. We are continually talking of you. Your names are truly "as familiar in our mouths as household words." "I wish the Shelleys were here." "What have Mr. or Mrs. Shelley to say to that?" "I think Shelley would almost be as well with us here this fine hot summer weather as in Italy." "I wish I had him writing here with me, and reading one another lectures upon being dilatory and diaphragmatical." "Mary would have been amused, perhaps, at the opera to-night;"—and then we look up to your box, almost hoping to see a thin, patrician-looking cosmopolite yearning out upon us, and a sedate-faced young lady bending in a similar direction, with her great tablet of a forehead, and her white shoulders unconscious of a crimson gown. *A propos* (though the word is misapplied, as it happens to be really applicable), the opera is not altogether so entertaining as it was during the God-gift dispensation (Todor, *i. e.* Theodore), Mrs. Fine-Eyes (Bellocchi) being coarse in every other respect except her voice, and that is too sharp at top. She is the oddest little heyday lump you ever saw, fantastically dressed, and looking alternately good-humoured and sulky to an excess. Peacock has been reasoned by some mathematician out of his love for the opera, and is to read Greek, they say, instead, on Saturday nights—the Dithyrambic, of course—to begin at seven precisely. What do you think of this *début* of mine in scandal? But he glories in doing nothing except upon theory. He falls in love, as it were, upon a gravitating principle. His passion, literally, as well as metaphorically, is quite problematical. Let B be Miss Jenkins, &c. I see a good deal of Lamb, Hazlitt, Coulson, the Novellos, &c., but as much at their own house as at mine, or rather more just now. We give no dinners as we used. Our two other out-of-door amusements are the theatre (an involuntary one), and taking our books and sandwiches, and spending a day in the fields,—which we do often. Mr. Lloyd, an old Latinist and friend of Lamb, and

translator of Alfieri, has come to town, and speaks highly of Shelley, with whose poetry he is well acquainted. He laughs at those who accuse him of no principle, and says he is evidently full of principles, and as for that matter, of religion, too. What do you think of this baulk in their teeth? L. is a man much shaken by sickness, but very acute-headed and metaphysical. Farewell, till I write again, which shall be speedily. Tell me if I write with too great levity, and I will be as grave as my sympathy is sincere. Try and walk, in spite both of bitter and sweet burdens. Marianne does, and is the better for it.—Ever truly yours,

L. H.

To P. B. and M. W. Shelley.

8, *York Buildings, New Road,*
August, 1819.

My dear Friends,—Whenever I write to you, I seem to be transported to your presence. I dart out of the window like a bird, dash into a south-western current of air, skim over the cool waters, hurry over the basking lands, rise like a lark over the mountains, fling like a swallow into the vallies, skim again, pant for breath, there's Leghorn—*eccomi!* how d'ye do?

I wish you would encourage my epistolatory interviews by writing to me every Monday morning; I would write on the same day myself—say at nine o'clock; and then we should have the additional pleasure of knowing that we were occupied on the very same thoughts, and almost chatting together. I will begin the system, at any rate; and if you do not help me to go on with it, why, I will heap Christian coals of fire on your heads by endeavouring to go on without you. There is the same continued sunshine this season as last year. Every Saturday, when I go to office, I seem to walk through vallies of burning bricks, the streets and pavement are so intensely hot; but, then, there is a perpetual fanning of fresh air in the fields, and you may imagine I am oftener there.

Sometimes I ramble about in them, sometimes take my meals, sometimes lie down and read. The other day I had a delicious sleep in a haycock. These green fields and blue skies throw me into a kind of placid intoxication. Are there many moments more delicious than the one in which you feel yourself going to slumber, with the sense of green about you, of an air in your face, and of the great sky arching over your head? One feels, at such times, all the grandeur of planetary consciousness without the pain of it. You know what I mean. There is a sort of kind and beautiful sensuality in it which softens the cuts and oppressiveness of intellectual perception. Certainly, a country so green as England cannot well be equalled by any other at such a season; and did not the less pleasant *causes* of that green return, I should try my utmost to induce you to come back again; for, at this identical moment, I do not think you would be more comfortable anywhere than in such a place, with a book or two, a basket of fruit, and (O vain, flattered friend!) Leigh Hunt. Shelley does indeed flatter me, when he writes to me as the "best friend" he has left behind. I heartily wish he had any better, for I am sure that they would go through a dozen fires for him; and, as for that matter, so would I. In no race of friendship would I be the last, if my heart broke for it at the goal. But enough of this at present. Pray do not let Shelley be uneasy about my pecuniary affairs. It was he that enabled me to throw off the weight of them at first, and I should think it an ill return if I did not at least exert all the faculties which he set free. . . . . I guess, by Shelley's questions about the *Euganean Hills*, that he has not seen my criticism yet in the *Examiner*, for surely I spoke there of a poem which I admire beyond measure, for thought, imagination, music, everything. He has a great admirer here from the Lakes, who has come to London for his health—Lloyd, one of the earliest Lake poets. More of him in my next. God thrice bless you, Shelley *mio*, *Marina mia*.—Ever most affectionately yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.*

Livorno, 15th August, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—How good of you to write to us so often, and such kind letters! But it is lending a beggar. What can I offer in return?

Though surrounded by suffering and disquietude, and, latterly almost overcome by our strange misfortune,† I have not been idle. My *Prometheus* is finished, and I am on the eve of completing another work,‡ totally different from anything you might consider that I should write; of a more popular kind; and, if anything of mine could deserve attention, of higher claims. "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, till thou approve the performance."

I send you a little poem § to give to Ollier for publication, but *without my name.* P. will correct the proofs. I wrote it with the idea of offering it to the *Examiner*, but find it is too long. It was composed last year, at Este; two of the characters you will recognize; and the third is also, in some degree, a painting from nature, but, with respect to time and place, ideal. You will find the little piece, I think, in some degree consistent with your own ideas of the manner in which poetry ought to be written. I have employed a certain familiar style of language to express the actual way in which people talk with each other, whom education and a certain refinement of sentiment have placed above the use of vulgar idioms. I use the word *vulgar* in its most extensive sense. The vulgarity of rank and fashion is as gross, in its way, as that of poverty, and its cant terms equally expressive of bare conceptions, and, therefore, equally unfit for poetry. Not that the familiar style is to be admitted in the treatment of a subject wholly ideal, or in that part of any subject which

* *Letters from Italy.*

† The sudden death of William Shelley, which happened in Rome, 6th June, 1819.

‡ *The Cenci.*

§ *Julian and Maddalo.*

relates to common life, where the passion, exceeding a certain limit, touches the boundaries of that which is ideal. Strong passion expresses itself in metaphor, borrowed from objects alike remote or near, and casts over all the shadow of its own greatness. But what am I about? If my grandmother sucks eggs, was it I who taught her?

If *you* would really correct the proof, I need not trouble P., who, I suppose, has enough. Can you take it as a compliment, that I prefer to trouble you?

I do not particularly wish this poem to be known as mine; but, at all events, I would not put my name to it. I leave you to judge whether it is best to throw it into the fire, or to publish it. So much for self—*self*, that burr that will stick to one. Your kind expressions about my *Eclogue* gave me great pleasure; indeed, my great stimulus in writing is to have the approbation of those who feel kindly towards me. The rest is mere duty. I am also delighted to hear that you think of us and form fancies about us. We cannot yet come home. Most affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

FROM PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.*

Livorno, 8th September, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—At length has arrived Ollier's parcel, and with it the portrait. What a delightful present! It is almost yourself, and we sat talking with it, and of it, all the evening. It is a great pleasure to us to possess it—a pleasure in time of need, coming to us when there are few others. How we wish it were you, and not your picture! How I wish we were with you!

This parcel, you know, and all its letters, are now a year old—some older. There are all kinds of dates, from March to August, and "your date," to use Shakspeare's expression, "is better in a pie or pudding than in your letter." "Vir-

* *Letters from Italy.*

ginity," Parolles says, but letters are the same thing in another shape.

With it came, too, Lamb's works. I have looked at none of the other books yet. What a lovely thing is his *Rosamund Gray!* How much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest parts of our nature in it! When I think of such a mind as Lamb's—when I see how unnoticed remain things of such exquisite and complete perfection—what should I hope for myself, if I had not higher objects in view than fame!

I have seen too little of Italy and of pictures. Perhaps P. has shown you some of my letters to him. But at Rome I was very ill, seldom able to go out without a carriage; and though I kept horses for two months there, yet there is so much to see! Perhaps I attended more to sculpture than painting, its forms being more easily intelligible than that of the latter. Yet I saw the famous works of Raphael, whom I agree with the whole world in thinking the finest painter. With respect to Michael Angelo, I dissent, and think with astonishment and indignation of the common notion that he equals, and in some respects exceeds, Raphael. He seems to me to have no sense of moral dignity and loveliness; and the energy for which he has been so much praised, appears to me to be a certain rude, external, mechanical quality, in comparison with anything possessed by Raphael, or even much inferior artists. His famous painting in the Sistine Chapel seems to me deficient in beauty and majesty, both in the conception and the execution. He has been called the Dante of painting; but if we find some of the gross and strong outlines which are employed in the most distasteful passages of the *Inferno*, where shall we find *your* Francesca—where, the spirit coming over the sea in a boat, like Mars rising from the vapours of the horizon—where, Matilda gathering flowers, and all the exquisite tenderness and sensibility and ideal beauty in which Dante excelled all poets except Shakspeare?

As to Michael Angelo's *Moses*—but you have a cast of that in England. I write these things heaven knows why!

I have written something and finished it, different from anything else, and a new attempt for me; and I mean to dedicate it to you. I should not have done so without your approbation, but I asked your picture last night, and it smiled assent. If I did not think it in some degree worthy of you, I would not make you a public offering of it. I expect to have to write to you soon about it. If Ollier is not turned Jew, Christian, or become infected with *the murrain*, he will publish it. Don't let him be frightened, for it is nothing which, by any courtesy of language, can be termed either moral or immoral.

Mary has written to Marianne for a parcel, in which I beg you will make Ollier enclose what you know would most interest me—your *Calendar* (a sweet extract from which I saw in the *Examiner*), and the other poems belonging to you; and, for some friends of mine, my *Eclogue*. This parcel, which must be sent instantly, will reach me by October; but don't trust letters to it, except just a line or so. When you write, write by the post. Ever your affectionate

P. B. S.

My love to Marianne and Bessy, and Thornton too, and Percy, &c.; and if you could imagine any way in which I could be useful to them here, tell me. I will inquire about the Italian chalk. You have no idea of the pleasure this portrait gives me.

To Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Monday, 6th September, 1819.*

My dear Friends,—We have as genuine a delight as you in your receipt of the portrait, for we are delighted with your delight. How and why it delights me in particular, I need not say. But you tell us nothing of *pictures in return*. I would not have you go to any expense, but a sketch, a drawing, might easily be managed. Indeed I do not suppose

* The date is thus in the manuscript, but it is evidently incorrect.

that expense on such an occasion would be thought of. What is it then? Is it a modesty, you rogues, vainer than my vanity? Shelley will answer, I am sure, for one of you against yourselves; and as to *himself*, let him plant himself opposite the artist, glancing neither to the right hand nor to the left, and look him straightforward in the face, and if a spirit come down from the planet Mercury to sit still a little, and look at me, the thing could not be finer. I grant you that, as somebody said, the best thing in a face is what is not to be found in a portrait; you say as much of my own; but I send you what I can; the rest you have in your hearts; and do you think my heart is not as good a painter? I have always thought as you do, Shelley, of Michael Angelo compared with Raphael, at least as far as I can recollect, or have thought at all. Yet I think higher of him, perhaps in some other points of view,—as in his ideas, for instance, of the old Prophets and Sibyls, his picture of the soldiers hurrying out of the water, and in a creation of Eve, which is almost Raphaelian, if I may judge by the engraving. But as to the horrible picture you mention, you have admirably described it. That figure of Christ in particular, is every way a mistake and a monstrosity. Do you remember Raphael's "Christ, and the miraculous draught of fishes?" that wonderful figure containing all the negative beauty, at least, of his doctrine, without any of the deformity of the faith which swallowed it up,—that self-sustained excess of gentleness,—that extreme of weakness, meeting on the very strength of its existence with power,—that passive obedience made paramount, neutralizing slavishness by disarming despotism—making a part, as it were, of the aërial element about it, a thing issuing from out the air,—and if it were to be carried away by it, as if it would submit and so resume itself. I scarcely know what I am writing, but I have a meaning in the core of it all; and, having a meaning, you will find it out, especially one of such a nature. I did not intend to write half so much on the subject any more than yourself; for I longed to thank you for your proposed dedication. It (your dedication) is one of the

greatest honours as well as pleasures, of which my nature is susceptible. My spirit walks the higher on the strength of its approach ; I, as an Italian poet could say, *più superbo va.* Nor do I say this laughingly, though I *do;* if you understand that paradox. I am so serious upon the subject that a smile comes to my relief. When the reason and the imagination, the vanity, the heart, the private spirit and the public, are all gratified at once, one's enjoyment may well be a little ineffable. Pray tell me whether you would like your anonymous poem to go to press directly, or whether you would not rather wait till the next book-season? Marianne, partly in penitence, and much in affection, is very busy with Marina's orders. We pack up a box to-morrow, in which I shall put such *delicio quodam* as I can manage. I need not say I thank you for your kind wishes about Thornton ; but after going on most promisingly with his drawing, he has shown more and more latterly such a decided preference for letters and books, that with great pleasure on my part I have let him have his way. God bless you. I showed Lamb that passage about his *Rosamund,* upon which he said with the greatest air of sincerity,—"I am proud of it." Next Monday a letter as usual; and I hope Marina will write speedily. Pray make her. Ever yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM MARY SHELLEY.

Leghorn, 28th August, 1819.

MY DEAR MARIANNE,—We are very dull at Leghorn, and I can therefore write nothing to amuse you. We live in a little country house at the end of a green lane surrounded by a *podere.* These *podere* are just the things Hunt would like. They are like our kitchen gardens, with the difference only that the beautiful fertility of this country gives them. A large bed of cabbages is very unpicturesque in England, but here the furrows are alternated with rows of grapes festooned

on their supporters. It is filled with olive, fig and peach trees, and the hedges are of myrtle, which have just ceased to flower; their flower has the sweetest faint smell in the world, like some delicious spice; green grassy walks lead you through the vines; the people are always busy, and it is pleasant to see three or four of them transform in one day a bed of Indian corn to one of celery. They work this hot weather in their shirts, or smock frocks (but their breasts are bare), their brown legs nearly the colour, only with a rich tinge of red in it, of the earth they turn up. They sing, not very melodiously, but very loud, Rossini's music, *Mi rivedrai ti revedrò*, and they are accompanied by the *cicala*, a kind of little beetle that makes a noise with its tail as loud as Johnny can sing; they live on trees, and three or four together are enough to deafen you. It is to the *cicala* that Anacreon has addressed an ode which they call "To a Grasshopper" in the English translations.

Well, here we live; I never am in good spirits—often in very bad, and Hunt's portrait has already seen me shed so many tears, that if it had his heart as well as his eyes, he would weep too in pity. But no more of this, or a tear will come now, and there is no use for that.

By-the-by, a hint Hunt gave about portraits. The Italian painters are very bad; they might make a nose like Shelley's, and perhaps a mouth, but I doubt it; but there would be no expression about it. They have no notion of anything except copying again and again their old masters, and somehow mere copying, however divine the original, does a great deal more harm than good.

Shelley has written a good deal, and I have done very little since I have been in Italy. I have had so much to see, and so many vexations independent of those which God has kindly sent to wean me from the world if I were too fond of it. S. has not had good health by any means, and when getting better, fate has ever contrived something to pull him back. He never was better than the last month of his stay in Rome, except the last week—then he watched sixty miserable death-

like hours without closing his eyes, and you may think what good that did him.

We see the *Examiners* regularly now, four together, just two months after the publication of the last. These are very delightful to us. I have a word to say to Hunt of what he says concerning Italian dancing. The Italians dance very badly. They dress for their dances in the ugliest manner; the men in little doublets with a hat and feather; they are very stiff, nothing but their legs move, and they twirl and jump with as little grace as may be. It is not for their dancing but their pantomime that the Italians are famous. You remember what we told you of the ballet of *Othello*. They tell a story by action, so that words appear perfectly superfluous things for them. In that they are graceful, agile, impressive and very affecting, so that I delight in nothing so much as a deep tragic ballet. But the dancing, unless as they sometimes do, they dance as common people; for instance, the dance of joy of the Venetian citizens on the return of *Othello*, is very bad indeed.

I am very much obliged to you for all your kind offers and wishes. Hunt would do Shelley a great deal of good, but that we may not think of; his spirits are tolerably good. But you do not tell me how you get on, how Bessy is, and where she is. Remember me to her. Clare is learning thorough bass and singing. We pay four crowns a month for her master, lessons three times a week; cheap work this, is it not? At Rome, we paid three shillings a lesson, and the master stayed two hours. The one we have now is the best in Leghorn. I write in the morning, read Latin till two, when we dine; then I read some English book, and two cantos of Dante with Shelley. In the evening our friends, the Gisbornes come, so we are not perfectly alone. I like Mrs. Gisborne very much indeed, but her husband is most dreadfully dull; and as he is always with her, we have not so much pleasure in her company as we otherwise should. . . .

To Mary Shelley.

Monday, 12th September, 1819,
York Buildings, New Road.

I will tell you, Marina, what I meant by "gigantic paragraphs:" short letters written in large characters. Count the number of words in one of my letters, and in one of yours, and see which has the greater. Thus you write a long letter, it is true, but not a full one. The characters I write in are like the devils in Pandæmonium, who shrunk themselves to pigmies that they might all get in; yours are the leaders of them, in secret conclave,—mightier, but not so numerous. Do not suppose I complain, though of course you could not object to my wishing as crammed letters as possible; and now I recollect, you *have* written some long letters of the interlined sort. In general, however, they are just as I say; but the last was in every respect an excellent one, and we thank you for it most heartily. We thank you for your account of the *podere;* we thank you for that of the dancing; we thank you for the length of the letter; and if you must still shed so many tears (which are better, too, than shedding none), we thank you for mingling with them the thought of your friends. We rejoice that you can find the least passing refreshment from that drop, even in so bitter a cup. But the tears will come into our eyes, and we want to diminish yours. There is a divine passage in the *Meditations of Marcus Antoninus,*—a man whose necessity for being patient, joined to an amiable temper, rendered him a kind of mitigated Stoic. He advises people who wish to rejoice themselves, to call to mind the several virtues or gifts of those they are acquainted with, as the industry of this person, the good-nature of that, &c. So, you see, you are to beatify yourself any time at a moment's notice by reflecting on Shelley's ardour of benevolence, Marianne's paper-cutting, or my performance of a Venetian ballad, or anything, in short, great or small, which is pleasurable and belongs to your friends. But the notion is beautiful, is it not? There is another noble passage in

him, which you and Shelley will admire when you see the *Pocket-Book*, where I have quoted it. And this reminds me that I must ask you, Shelley, to give me a few verses, if you have any to spare, for the next *Pocket-Book*, which will be speedily going to press. I have already begun to write the new matter, and what do you think? You remember the 200*l.* which Ollier was prevailed upon by you to advance me before you left London. The first number of the *Literary Pocket-Book* has sold so well, and promised so *better*, that I have liquidated the debt by selling him the copyright for that sum. I only retain the editorship, which had he not asked me to do, I should have stipulated for, seeing this new channel of opinion opened to me. I am writing for the second number, a new calendar divided into the four seasons, in each of which I describe what the mere idler *sees* about him, what the bigot, what the money-getter, &c., and what the observer of nature, showing the infinite superiority which the last has over the others in wealth of enjoyment. What a delightful description you give us, Marina, of the *podere*. You justly think I should enjoy the original. I have a poem of Tansillo's in the Parnaso Italiano, called *Il Podere*, in which he says,—

> "I pavimenti miei sien fiori ed erbe,
> . . . l'arche, ove il tesoro io serbe."

The *botti* of course imply the grapes. But what used to delight me in prison was a little poem which follows it by one Baldi, called *Celeo, o l'Orto;* because I had a little modicum of a garden there which I dressed up with trellises and a handful of turf, and some flowers, and in autumn with festoons of scarlet beans in default of grapes; and all this used to make me read with an antibilious transport a passage where Celeo exclaims:—

> "Mio picciol orto,
> A me città, palazzo, e loggia,
> A me sei vigna, e campo, e selva, e prato."

I have seen the brown, muddy-tinged legs you mention in pictures by Bassano and others. They look as fine and vital,

in my opinion, as the red stems of the vine, where the wine seems already circulating. As we must certainly move, we have made up our minds to move to Kentish-town, which is a sort of compromise between London and our beloved Hampstead. The London end of it touches so nearly to Camden-town, which is so near to London, that Marianne will not be afraid of my returning from the theatres at night; and the country end is extremely quiet and rural, running to the wood and the slopes between Hampstead and Highgate. (Hallo! the slopes are running away with me. I forget I am at the back of my letter.) You will see in my last letter that I have anticipated what you say about the pictures,—so what have you to say *still?* God bless you. Bessy joins in kindest remembrances. I feel nearer to you now I write every week; and when I hear as often, the neighbourhood will be doubled. —Your affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

To P. B. AND M. W. SHELLEY.

8, *York Buildings, New Road,*
Monday, 20th September.

[Accidentally delayed till 20th October.]

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Marianne, the jade, made me keep my last Monday's letter, in order that I might tell you in a post-script when the box had gone off; and lo! the box is not off till to-day; so that you will receive two Mondays' letters at once. It is not her fault, however, that the box did not go earlier. Some little circumstances prevented it, which could not be helped.

Bad news! The box cannot go till some things in it are made up. So says the man at the office, and accordingly Bessy has returned with it in a coach, and it must be regulated, and divided in two. We will make all the haste we can. Marianne, who expects to be confined daily, has some things of her own in preparation, which she can send; and we hope and trust they will yet be in time. May the little

Italian repay you for what you have suffered in Italy! If on no higher account, I should be sorry that you came away from such a country without some associations, human as well as inanimate. You know, I suppose, that Smollett was buried at Livorno. There were some things about his writings very unpleasant, but he was an honest man, and an independent one, and is understood to have done immense good to the poor wounded sailors in naval fights, by those pictures of pitiless surgery and amputation in *Roderick Random*. It is a curious coincidence that our other chief novelist, Fielding, lies buried at Lisbon. We have no poet out of our own green earth. But Chaucer, as well as Milton, paid a visit to Italy;—so did Gray, so did Drummond, Donne, and the Earl of Surrey. There is a fine ghastly image in a poem of Donne's on the subject, which will please you. He is dissuading his wife from going with him (he went on a political mission), and hopes that she will not start in her sleep at night, and fancy him slain.

> "Crying out—'Oh!—oh!
> Nurse, oh! my love is slain! *I saw him go*
> *O'er the white Alps alone;* I saw him, I,
> Assailed, taken, fight, stabbed, bleed, fall, and die."

I am tempted, for other reasons, to copy out the beginning of this poem for you, which, with the exception of a little coarseness which got into the grain of this writer's strong intellect, is very intense throughout.

> "By our first strange and fatal interview;
> By all desires, which thereof did ensue;
> By our long striving hopes; by that remorse
> Which my words' masculine persuasive force
> Begot in thee; and by the memory
> Of hurts, which spies and rivals threatened me,
> I *calmly beg*. But by thy father's wrath;
> By all pains which want and divorcement hath,
> I conjure thee: and all the oaths which I
> And thou hast sworn to seal joint constancy,
> I here unswear, and overswear them thus:
> Thou shalt not love by means so dangerous;

> Temper, O fair love! love's impetuous rage;
> Be my true mistress, not my feigned page.
> I'll go, and, by thy kind leave, leave behind
> Thee, only worthy to nurse in my mind
> Thirst to come back."

She could not accompany him, it seems, openly, and wished to do so in the disguise of a page. Do you know Donne? I should like to have some more talk with you about him. He was one of those over-metaphysical-headed men, who can find out connections between everything and anything, and allowed himself at *last* to become a clergyman, after he had (to my conviction, at least) been as free and deep a speculator in morals as yourself. (I am talking to Shelley, you see, Marina—but you are one flesh.) Are not those three words, "I calmly beg," very grave and lovely? And all the rest,—is it not fine, and earnest, and "masculine-persuasive?"

I am refreshing myself, when I can snatch a holiday hour, with translating that delightful compromise of art with nature, Tasso's *Aminta*. For I have now a new periodical work in hand, in addition to the *Examiner*. My prospectuses come out in a week or two, and the first number follows the week after. It is to be called the *Indicator*, after a bird of that name who shows people where to find wild honey; and will, in fact, be nothing but a collection of very short pieces of remark, biography, ancient fictions, &c.; in short, of any subjects that come to hand, and of which I shall endeavour to *extract the essence* for the reader. It will have nothing temporary whatsoever in it, political or critical; and indeed will be as pleasant labour to me as I can have, poetry always excepted. Will you throw me a paragraph or so now and then, as little startling at *first* as possible to vulgar prejudices? It will come out every Thursday, price twopence,—an accomplished specimen, you see, of the *Twopenny Trash*. If it succeed, it will do me great service, being my sole property; and I am weary with writing every day, and making nothing of it to put an end to my straitnesses, though the *Examiner* increases too.—Ever your affectionate LEIGH HUNT.

FROM PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.*

Livorno, 27th September, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—We are now on the point of leaving this place for Florence, where we have taken pleasant apartments for six months, which brings us to the 1st of April, the season at which new flowers and new thoughts spring forth upon the earth and in the mind. What is then our destination is yet undecided. I have not yet seen Florence, except as one sees the outside of the streets; but its *physiognomy* indicates it to be a city which, though the ghost of a republic, yet possesses most amiable qualities. I wish you could meet us there in the spring, and we would try to muster up a "lièta briganta," which, leaving behind them the pestilence of remembered misfortunes, might act over again the pleasures of the Interlocutors in Boccaccio. I have been lately reading this most divine writer. He is, in a high sense of the word, a poet, and his language has the rhythm and harmony of verse. I think him not equal certainly to Dante or Petrarch, but far superior to Tasso and Ariosto, the children of a later and a colder day. I consider the three first as the productions of the rigour of the infancy of a new nation—as rivulets from the same spring as that which fed the greatness of the republics of Florence and Pisa, and which checked the influence of the German emperors, and from which, through obscurer channels, Raphael and Michael Angelo drew the light and harmony of their inspiration. When the second-rate poets of Italy wrote, the corrupting blight of tyranny was already hanging on every bud of genius. Energy, and simplicity, and unity of idea were no more. In vain do we seek, in the finest passages of Ariosto and Tasso, any expression which at all approaches, in this respect, to those of Dante and Petrarch. How much do I admire Boccaccio! What descriptions of nature are those in his little introductions to every new day! It is the morning of life, stripped of that mist of familiarity which

* *Letters from Italy.*

makes it obscure to us. Boccaccio seems to me to have possessed a deep sense of the fair ideal of human life considered in its social relations. His more serious theories of love agree especially with mine. He often expresses things lightly too, which have serious meanings of a very beautiful kind. He is a moral casuist, the opposite of the Christian, stoical, ready-made, and worldly system of morals. Do you remember one little remark, or rather maxim of his, which might do some good to the common narrow-minded conceptions of love,—"Bocca bacciata non perde ventura; anzi rinnuova, come fa la luna?"

We expect Mary to be confined towards the end of October. The birth of a child will probably retrieve her from some part of her present melancholy depression.

It would give me much pleasure to know Mr. Lloyd. Do you know, when I was in Cumberland, I got Southey to borrow a copy of Berkeley from him, and I remember observing some pencil notes in it, probably written by Lloyd, which I thought particularly acute. One, especially, struck me as being the assertion of a doctrine, of which even then I had long been persuaded, and on which I had founded much of my persuasions, as regarded the imagined cause of the universe—"Mind cannot create, it can only perceive." Ask him if he remembers having written it. Of Lamb you know my opinion, and you can bear witness to the regret which I felt when I learned that the calumny of an enemy had deprived me of his society whilst in England. Ollier told me that the *Quarterly* are going to review me. I suppose it will be a pretty ; and, as I am acquiring a taste for humour and drollery, I confess I am curious to see it. I have sent my *Prometheus Unbound* to P.; if you ask him for it, he will show it you. I think it will please you.

Whilst I went to Florence, Mary wrote, but I did not see her letter.—Well, good-by. Next Monday I shall write to you from Florence. Love to all. Most affectionately your friend,

P. B. S.

8, *York Buildings, New Road,*
2nd December, 1819.

My dear Shelley, dear Friend,—What shall I say to you for my long silence? You have been loading me with letters and with honours, and yet I have been looking all the while like the most ungrateful person upon earth. I say "looking," for I have not really been so: nor indeed do I suppose, after all, that you thought me anything of the sort. Perhaps it was in the confidence of knowing otherwise that I have reposed, if repose it may be called, which repose has been none distinguishable in conscience, pen or limb. But I believe there are times when, at the very moment one's friend shows himself the most trusting in us, one does the least on that very account, out of a certain fulness and insolence of security. Have you ever felt it to be so on these occasions? I hope you have:—but you will understand and feel what I mean, if there be any truth in it. I can nevertheless assure you, my dear friend, that I have been intending, and vowing, every day to write to you: and nothing would have hindered me from doing so every week, but some unpleasant matters of business, the conclusion of my late struggles to settle my difficulties, all about which, and how I am mastering them,—for ever, I hope,—I will tell you when we *meet*. What a word that is! Mind, now, you have put that word into my head it will not get out again till we do meet. These matters of business, by a singular and regularly recurring fatality, took me away from my pen every week on the days which I had devoted to the next week's *Indicator*. The consequence was, that I was obliged to write for my Wednesday's paper on Monday and Tuesday, and then I regularly repented of not writing to you; as regularly vowed to do so to-day and the other, and as regularly behaved like a ——— I leave you to supply the word, for I know it will be as kind a one as possible. And yet, in the meantime, comes your dedication, and all your kind letters, with all your other enclosures. How shall I thank you for that true and

cordial honour?—true, I mean, to the height of the sentiment of friendship, whatever it may be in regard to the qualities for which your flattering hand has set me on a level with that height. I scarcely know what I am saying in the extremity of pleasure which this testimony of your regard and of my sense of your intentions has given me; but I feel as if you had bound, not only my head, but my very soul and body, with laurels. Language is a poor thing sometimes, is it not? even when it may seem, to unyearning hearts, excessive. I will write more speedily, and tell you about your political songs and pamphlets, which we must publish. What a delicious love song is that you enclosed! I would put it into the *Indicator by-and-by*—at present this boldness of benevolence must go into the more established *Examiner*. As to the *Indicators*, I make up my mind that you and Marina will like them, as they tell me I am at my best at this work, which succeeds beyond all expectation. There are some articles I am sure you will like. I send you as many as the Post Office will let me get into one letter; and, to say the truth, you would have had them before, but I was so poor I could not afford the out-post money; but I shall do very well. Ever most affectionately yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—I intended to say so much about Marina's new work that I have left myself no room for it. I can only say, therefore, at present, that we are delighted to hear of it, as an earnest of fresh comfort to both of you. Kiss my new friend for me twenty times, and its mother (Boccaccione volente) twenty more; at least if she is violent also. I have altered my mind upon reading your delightful song, Shelley, for the ninth or tenth time: I shall put it, *incontinently*, into the *Indicator*. Many, many thanks to Marina for her letter, which Marianne, as well as myself, will answer.

To P. B. and M. W. Shelley.

13, *Mortimer Terrace, Kentish Town,*
6th April, 1820.

My dear Friends,—How many things have I got to chat with you about; for which I foresee that not one, nor two, nor three letters will suffice: and as for that matter, all the letters that could pass to and fro betwixt here and Italy, like doves over the water, could not suffice. Friends, to say all they can to each other, must talk and look. Many thanks for Matina's Italian letter, which was like a piece of music in pothooks instead of crotchets. I will answer it next week by itself. Shelley's tragedy is out and flourishing. I recently took, as his friend and representative, congratulations on all sides, upon the dedication, the preface, and the drama. Ollier, who thought it would not sell, had to tell Henry Hunt the other day, that the first edition had almost all gone off already. . . . . What a noble book, Shelley, have you given us! What a true, stately, and yet affectionate mixture of poetry, philosophy, and human nature, and horror, and all-redeeming sweetness of intention, for there is an undersong of suggestion through it all, that sings, as it were, after the storm is over, like a brook in April. But you will see what I say about it in the next *Examiner* but one. I gave a brief notice of it two or three weeks ago, announcing this longer one, which will just precede, I hope, the second edition.

We have had a late spring here; but it is supposed the summer will be the finer for it. The blossoms will not be so blighted. The fields and gardens are full of that exquisite young green, crisp and juicy, the quintessence of rain and sunshine, which is a beauty I suppose you will concede us even from the Vale of Arno. By the way, a book has been lent me, the pictures in which make me think of you. It is a *Life of Boccaccio* by a Count Baldelli, containing four views of scenery near Florence, places which he has described in the *Decameron*, and in his young rural novel *Ameto*, which I have the pleasure to have before me also. There is

the Valle di Mugnone, the Valle della Donne, the Villa Schifanoia, and his native place Ortaldo. Pray, get the book if you can, and let me think I have the pleasure of looking over the plates with you. God bless you, my dear friends.—Your ever affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

To PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Mortimer Terrace, Kentish Town,
23rd August, 1820.

Ah! my dear Shelley, what can I say to you, especially after your last letter, for not having written so long? I can say nothing but what I have said before, that my head is so continually bruised with work I do not even write to you; and I must confess, as I confessed before, that I more especially take the liberty with you, because I know you will bear it; and I must add, which I added before, that I know I ought not to make this excuse on that very account; and I must promise ("Ah! Hunt, as you promised before") that I will do so no longer. Well, I will say no more at present. Hope in me, you know, and I shall hope in myself. You wish to hear from me about politics. I know you see the *Examiner*, or I should have written about them often; albeit, after my newspaper work, I am still less of Pistol's mind than before, and do not like to "lay my head in Furies' lap." You know the glorious news from Spain and Naples, and have seen perhaps the edifying note of the Russian Emperor, upon the former subject, as a member of the Holy Alliance. As these despots, whatever they pretend, will not, and cannot do any good to the world, it is advisable that they should expose themselves as much as possible. The Emperor affects to sneer, of all other things, at *soldiers* being concerned in revolutions, which is a foolish thing now-a-days, and wanting in the common instinct of despotism. He wants the Cortes to eat their own words, and declare that Quiroga and the others have done a bad thing, and set a wrong, revolutionary

example! You see how frightened these autocrats are at these new signs of the times. He also signifies his expectation that the other allied courts will express themselves like him. However, you will be pleased to hear, that in answer to questions from Lord Holland, and Lord John Russell, on Monday, the ministers gave us to understand that they did not mean to interfere. Probably something like jealousy of Russia, as well as the want of money, has to do with this decision; but after all, they must be aware that nothing can really stop the progress of feeling in the Peninsula. At present, we are all in a pretty turmoil about the Queen. Her trial has commenced, and either the evidence against her is perjured beyond all the perjury in Italy and Ireland to boot, or else she has been playing most princely vagaries indeed. They will furnish, if true, another instance of the tendencies of royalty to subject its unhappy possessors to the grossest self-wills; so that legitimacy will get nothing by the business any way; and if she recriminates, as it is hoped and announced she will, it will get still less. The whole thing, indeed, will be one of the greatest pushes given to declining royalty that the age has seen. The Queen, after all, will have been very ill-used, let her have done what she may: for her accusers are notoriously as bad; and it will not be one of the least advantages of this trial, whatever disgust one must encounter by the way, that people's minds will be set thinking [manuscript illegible] questions of justice respecting the intercourse of the sexes [manuscript illegible] to keep them in their view meantime. (I have just this minute seen more of the evidence. The witnesses, or rather the only one that has yet been examined, is so ready in his recollections of everything that tells against the Queen, and so visited with want of recollection in everything else, that he would upturn at one minute everything he says at another, if the character of courts, and their licentiousness, did not tell against the present object of their malevolence.) The public are likely to be edified in this way for months. In addition to the other causes that render the Italian witnesses

suspected, they are kept cooped up by the Ministers in a place adjoining Westminster Hall, and brought out as they are wanted. The Queen attends, on and off: retiring when they come to speak of her baths and merrymakings. If her pleasures had been in better taste, the liberal would only sympathise with her; but they talk, or trump up, disgusting stories of her coarseness,—her retiring with Bergami before a ship's crew, looking at the indecent exhibitions of buffoons, &c. Lucrezia Borgia was hardly worse, according to their account. You may look upon the British public, at present, as constantly occupied in reading trials for adultery. How you delight me with what you say of the *Indicator!* I hope you will like the succeeding papers as well. I have now nearly completed a volume, and speculate upon writing three at least, if my health will hold out. I have wanted books terribly, but I am now going to read at the British Museum. We drink tea this evening with the Gisbornes. Mr. Gisborne is placidity personified. He seems born to wear a meek great-coat, sip tea in summer time, and agree with one's arguments. Whether it is on this latter account I know not, but he appears more knowing at bottom than he appears at first. There is an exquisite reasonableness in him. Mrs. Gisborne has a sweet voice, which drops an Italian word, now and then, deliciously. There is something to me very pleasant about her mouth, though they tell me it is not handsome; and she appears sensitive and intelligent. She must have been a nice malleable person when young; and now she is not to be called old or unimpressible. Many, many kind remembrances to Marina, who, I fear, thinks proper to give me to understand that she forgets me; but she doesn't: I am sure she ought not, for I think of her often and often.—Ever your affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—Lord Byron, they say, came to town on Saturday, with a packet for the Queen. I know not whether he will send to me, and I delay going to him; so between both, perhaps, neither will be done. You will see that I made an

Indicator out of the MS. about the *Cenci*, as a preface to what I said of your noble play. Marianne's love. We are all well for housewives, and authors, and people that cannot have their way when they ought.

I have just seen the *Prometheus*. What noble things in it! What grand lines and affectionate thoughts! But it is liable to some of the objections against the *Revolt of Islam*. Keats, who is better, is sensible of your kindness, and has sent you a letter and a fine piece of poetry by the Gisbornes. He is advised to go to Rome, but will call on you in the spring.

FROM PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

[*Pisa*] 11*th November*, 1820.

MY BEST MARIANNE,—I am delighted to hear that you complain of me for not writing to you, although I have much more reason to complain of you for not writing to me. At least it promises me a letter from you, and you know with what pleasure we receive, and with what anxiety we expect intelligence from you — almost the only friends who now remain to us.

I am afraid that the strict system of expense to which you are limited annoys you all very much, and that Hunt's health suffers both from that and from the incredible exertions which I see by the *Indicators* and the *Examiners* that he is making. Would to Heaven that I had the power of doing you some good! but when you are sure that the wish is sincere, the bare expression of it may help to cheer you.

The Gisbornes are arrived, and have brought news of you, and some books, the principal part of which, however, are yet to arrive by sea. Keats's new volume has arrived to us, and the fragment called *Hyperion* promises for him that he is destined to become one of the first writers of the age. His other things are imperfect enough, and, what is worse, written in the bad sort of style which is becoming fashionable among those who fancy that they are imitating Hunt and Wordsworth. But of all these things nothing is worse than ———,

in spite of Hunt's extracting the only good stanzas, with his usual good nature. Indeed *I* ought not to complain of Hunt's good nature, for no one owes so much to it. Is not the vulgarity of these wretched imitations of Lord Byron carried to a pitch of the sublime? His indecencies, too, both against sexual nature, and against human nature in general, sit very awkwardly upon him. He only affects the libertine: he is, really, a very amiable, friendly, and agreeable man, I hear. But is not this monstrous? In Lord Byron all this has an analogy with the general system of his character, and the wit and poetry which surround hide with their light the darkness of the thing itself. They contradict it even; they prove that the strength and beauty of human nature can survive and conquer all that appears most inconsistent with it. But for a writer to be at once filthy and dull is a crime against gods, men, and columns. For Heaven's sake do not show this to any one but Hunt, for it would irritate the wasp's nest of the irritable race of poets.

Where is Keats now? I am anxiously expecting him in Italy, when I shall take care to bestow every possible attention on him. I consider his a most valuable life, and I am deeply interested in his safety. I intend to be the physician both of his body and his soul, to keep the one warm, and to teach the other Greek and Spanish. I am aware, indeed, in part, that I am nourishing a rival who will far surpass me; and this is an additional motive, and will be an added pleasure.

We are at this moment removing from the Bagni to Pisa, for the Serchio has broken its banks, and all the country about is under water. An old friend and fellow-townsman of mine, Captain Medwin, is on a visit to us at present, and we anxiously expect Keats, to whom I would write if I knew where to address.

Adieu, my dear Marianne. Write soon; kiss all the babes for me, and tell me news of them, and give my love to Bessy and Hunt.—Yours ever affectionately,

P. B. Shelley.

FROM MARY SHELLEY.

[*Pisa*] 29*th December*, 1820.

. . . . He [Shelley] has written a long poem [*The Epipsychidion*], which no one has ever read, and like the illustrious Sotherby, gives the law to a few distinguished Blues of Pisa. Well, good-night; to-morrow I will finish my letter and talk to you about our unfortunate young friend, Emilia Viviani.*

It is grievous to see this beautiful girl wearing out the best years of her life in an odious convent, where both mind and body are sick from want of the appropriate exercise for each. I think she has great talent, if not genius; or if not an internal fountain, how could she have acquired the mastery she has of her own language, which she writes so beautifully, or those ideas which lift her so far above the rest of the Italians. She has not studied much, and now hopeless from a five years' confinement, everything disgusts her, and she looks with hatred and distaste even on the alleviations of her situation. Her only hope is in a marriage which her parents tell her is concluded, although she has never seen the person intended for her. Nor do I think the change of situation will be much for the better, for he is a younger brother, and will live in the house with his mother, who they say is *molta secante.* Yet she may then have the free use of her limbs; she may then be able to walk out among the fields, vineyards, and woods of her country, and see the mountains and the sky, and not be as now, a dozen steps to the right, and then back to the left another dozen, which is the longest walk her convent garden affords, and that, you may be sure, she is very seldom tempted to take. . . . .

* The lady to whom *Epipsychidion* is addressed.

To Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Vale of Health, Hampstead,
1st March, 1821.

My dearest Friend,—When you hear that this week has been the first in which I have written any politics in the *Examiner*, or anything but paragraphs in the *Indicator*, for three or four months, you will hold me more excused than I am to myself for not writing sooner to Italy. I have indeed had a hard bout of it this time; and if the portrait you have with you sympathised with my appearance, like those magic glasses in romance, the patience you found in it ought at least to look twice as great, and the cheeks twice as small. You know how the pressure which was left upon me, and my wish not to trouble my friends again, or rather to do them justice and myself the proper good, induced me to double my writing and set up the *Indicator*. Unluckily my anxiety had not strengthened me for the task; my animal spirits, however, revived, especially with the success of the work; but *again* I did a very foolish thing—I neglected my exercise, and was obliged occasionally to recruit myself with wine. I could not treat myself thus artificially, while I was drawing so constantly upon my faculties, for nothing. Exhaustion tempted me into excitement; excitement and work threw me back again into exhaustion; and at last I seemed as if I were going to break up at once, body and mind. Luckily, I retained a saving knowledge as to the mode of cure. With the necessity of leaving off feverish stimulants, came a greater necessity of putting myself in motion. The more I exercised, the more I removed the natural indolence of my former state of health; and though I have gone through pangs infernal in the process, and been obliged, whenever I was not on my feet, to sit, with as stony a patience as I could get into, and let melancholy crumble away my cheeks, yet the persevering all the while in as natural a mode of living as possible, not only helped me to keep a glimpse of hope in my eyes, but has at last, I think, put me into a more *promising* state of health than I have

enjoyed a long while. I am sufficiently nervous still; I should be so even with the recollection of the ideas that have gone through my head; but they are diminishing daily; I again begin to enjoy intervals of forgetfulness to everything but my books and the trees; what hurt my health did no injury to my finances, and though they suffered by my leaving off writing so long, you need have no anxiety on that score. You will be sorry to hear that my brother has been found "guilty" of standing by the constitution, by a ministerial jury; but you will be refreshed at hearing that I had for some time withdrawn from the proprietorship of the paper by his particular wish, in order that Government might not be able to imprison both of us at once. I consented at last with the less scruple, not only because my health was the more precarious, but because my brother's name is obliged to be at the bottom of the paper as printer, and printers, though not editors, are indictable, like proprietors. Unfortunately, my brother himself has had a severe illness, but he got better in time to make an admirable defence, which you will see in the *Examiner*, together with the strong effect it had on the jury. We have two grounds also for hoping a new trial, and at all events do not expect that his imprisonment will be long, as the Government, however savage, are willing to get what popularity they can just now, and there is a coronation coming. You must excuse a letter all about myself, after the one I have just received from you; and not only so, but Marina must forgive me for not having answered hers. I engage to write her the first one I send forth beyond the size of a note, and I trust she will not expect it the less early or the less kindly for my not promising any particular day for it. I send her as many kisses as she would put up with from a sick face, and those, I know, would be not a few, were it for nothing but sick friendship's sake. Do you hear that, dear Mary? and will you, or Shelley, write me another letter beforehand to tell me how you are? Marianne used to come behind me and put an Italian letter before my eyes, as a charm to take the jaundice out of them. And yet I——

Well, no matter. You see what it is to have an impudent fellow for a friend, who reckons on his being pardoned; but I hope to mend all my ungrateful faults with my health. Not a word of review have I written yet upon *Prometheus Unbound*, but I must say for myself that it was out of a consciousness that I should have to go at length into it, and so a fear to begin, that I delayed so long; not forgetting, however, that I did not expect to be able to make so abstract and *odi-profanum* a poem at all recommendable to readers in general; but it ought to have had my homage at all events, and so should the divine Ode on the Skylark:—

"κοοφὶν καὶ πτηνὸν καὶ ἱερον."

Poor Keats! have you yet heard of him? They send word from Rome that he is dying; and he is so fearfully sensitive he cannot even bear to receive news from England: but I hope to the last, especially as I have seen remarkable recoveries in consumptive cases. I must leave off. My head began reeling in the middle of the last page.—Your affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

To P. B. and M. W. SHELLEY.

Vale of Health! Hampstead,
10th July, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIENDS,—I know not what you must think of me for not having heard from me sooner, but could I suppose you capable of any anger with me, it would all vanish if you could see my face. Many do not know me at first sight, I am grown so thin and gaunt. I began writing again only last week, after a lapse of months, and this, too, on account of my brother's anxiety for the *Examiner*, which has been lamentably falling off. I was obliged to give up the *Indicator* long ago, after having almost died over the latter numbers. It has not hurt me so much as I expected; but, sick or well, I could not write at all, and not write to you; and so I

thought it best to say something, at any rate, lest, in the wish to send you a long letter, and the continued inability to do so, it should be put off any longer. I need not tell you that it is our honesty which has injured our paper, particularly upon the occasion of Carlisle's trial, and public occurrences of a similar nature. Ours is almost the only journal that is not either dotard or hypocrite on such matters; and we could not have been treated with more spite and revenge, in some respects, if we had been Jesus himself come upon earth again, unknown to his would-be Christians. This is by no means, however, the main cause of my illness, but over-excitement, resulting from sedentary labour in general; and to add to our distress, my brother has been seriously ill for some time before he went to prison, and we have had nothing but illness in our family ever since. I came to get well in our little packing-case here, dignified with the title of house. I had no sooner seen the children safe through the measles, than the scarlet fever made its appearance; and poor little Mary, the gayest of the gay, and one of the most patient of the sick, has just been moaning here by the side of her mother and myself, as she has done for two days and nights, in pains of inflammatory fever and rheumatism. Nothing can exceed Marianne's care and activity, and never had she greater demands upon her spirit. It is but a few hours since the *baby* was all but given over by the doctor, in strong fits; and she was from one room to the other, with her ghost of a husband flitting about her, and scarcely giving herself time to wipe her tears. But why do I write all this to you—to Marina above all? It is, I believe, because I feel we have a common stock in trouble as well as joy; and, after a certain filling of one's cup, it becomes even refreshing to the heart to bathe in its overflowings. But you must imagine me a very patient person, nevertheless, I beg you, and a very magnanimous, who sticks to his profession of cultivating hope. It is seldom that I afford myself tears; and then only in company. I will write you the rest to-morrow. I am not weeping.

11th July.

Mary is out of danger. How great a thing a single joy is, and how it seems to swallow up, for the time, all one's sorrows! I must tell you a circumstance that does honour not only to the physician, but to the courtier. Sir William Knighton, who, since he attended us in our bridal days, has been appointed private physician and secretary to the King, came from Carlton House last night, at twelve o'clock, to see our little girl. You remember a good deed of his before, Shelley. You see he has not forgotten his practice. A little while ago he bestirred himself and saved a girl's life for killing her bastard child. The coming to see an old patient does not seem much; but it is a good deal, if you knew what poor creatures royal persons can be even in these as well as loftier matters. Thomas Moore told me that, when he was at a rout once, where the King, then Prince Regent, was present, the latter cast an evil eye on every person that accosted the author of the *Twopenny Post Bag*. "You may depend upon it," said Moore, "he would *cut* every one of those persons, if he knew him." Many thanks for your Greek news; but though it was pleasant to receive it from your mouth, or have it over again in your society, we had got it before. Nothing is so expeditious as the long feelers of avarice. The people on 'Change, I believe, hear the news before anybody else even in Crim Tartary. Marianne begs me to frame for her some decent excuses for not having sooner sent out to you. I have scandalously nibbed my pen with Shelley's all-accomplished penknife for weeks and weeks; and then Marianne and I look at each other and shake our heads, and think you the kindest and ourselves the most shameful people on earth. "And yet," she adds, "I have some excuses too, considering;" and so she has. Have patience, and we will send you all. The next time you write, pray tell us, as you did once before, how you pass your time daily. We feel more with you when we know what you are about at stated times. How I regretted I could not use the story which Marina sent me; but it was a cordial

sent to a dead man—the *Indicator* had long expired. Shelley has heard, I suppose, by this time, that the young bookseller who published his *Queen Mab* without leave has been prosecuted by the Society for Vice. We all told him he would, and I was doubly glad that I had refused him the use of a copy for his purpose; for I had no right, of course, to do such a thing without Shelley's leave, and concluded, upon the whole, he would not like. Indeed, when I found that the work was out, I felt remorse at not having interfered more actively. You may have heard also that Hazlitt, after his usual fashion towards those whom he likes, and gets impatient with, has been attacking Shelley, myself, and everybody else, the public included, though there his liking stops. I wrote him an angry letter about S.—the first one I ever did; and I believe he is sorry: but this is his way. Next week, perhaps, he will write a panegyric upon him. He says that Shelley provokes him by his going to a *pernicious* extreme on the liberal side, and so hurting it. I asked him what good he would do the said side by publicly abusing the supporters of it, and caricaturing them? To *this* he answers nothing. I told him I would not review his book, as I must quarrel with him publicly if I did so, and so hurt the cause further. Besides, I was not going to give publicity to his outrages. I was sorry for it on every account, because I really believe Hazlitt to be a disinterested and suffering man, who feels public calamities as other men do private ones; and this is perpetually redeeming him in my eyes. I told him so, as well as some other things; but you shall see our correspondence by and by. Did Shelley ever cut him up at Godwin's table? Somebody says so, and that this is the reason of Hazlitt's attack. I know that Hazlitt does *pocket* up wrongs in this way, to draw them out again some day or other. He says it is the only comfort which the friends of his own cause leave him. I tell this to you, Shelley, with the less scruple, because I know you will *not* revenge yourself. I reckon upon your leaving your personal battles to me. God bless you, ye two oceanic personages, Conchiglioso and Marina. I long

to come over the sea to you, in spite of my weary wings; but it cannot be. Do not think much of my morbid style. I know it is a trick of such illness as mine, and verily believe altogether I am getting better. Ever your most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

TO PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Hampstead, 28th August, 1821.

MY DEAREST SHELLEY,—I would come to you instantly, and do not say that I shall not come to you before long; but there are obstacles, at present, which you are not aware of. My life, however, in every point of view, seems the main thing; and if I do not continue to mend (as I am now doing), if I cannot write without again driving the blood to my head, and the winter or the *autumn* produces effects upon me which I dread, you may look upon it as *certain* that I shall come. It was what I should have longed to do, and have often spoken of as a beautiful impossibility; but your friendship has put it in my power; and, mind, if I do not get rid of my deadly symptoms, if they come upon me again and threaten to do away the only use of my remaining, I shall come to you and your fine climate as "my friend and my physician." The summer-time which we have had since I wrote has already shown me what a good-natured sky can do for maladies like mine; and the occasional returns of cloud and rain have also shown me what I have still to fear from a change of season. But you talk of the *Examiner*. Alas! my dear friend, the whole difficulty lies there. It had got to so low a pitch, and my absence reduced it to me so much lower, that we feared for its very existence, and upon this depends not only my family, but my brother's. Judge what I felt, seeing him, too, at the same time suffering in his health from anxiety, and cast into a prison for his honest indignation. Judge, also, what I must feel on the other side, when my return, joined with the late interesting public circumstances, appears to have brought back some *hundreds* of our readers.

To keep these is our present object; and, thank Heaven, I have been able to work for that purpose. If we lose readers down to a certain point (to which we were fast approaching), the paper does not pay its own expenses. All that we gain *above* that point is sheer profit; and, therefore, every gain is encouraging. I need not say what I have suffered in money matters. Your kindness guesses it but too well. But I have lived with such economy, voluntary as well as involuntary, that as soon as I have paid off what I am every week paying off, I shall be much easier again, and my friends need be under no concern for any more extra embarrassment, *provided* we can keep up the paper. Now, at *present*, it seems necessary for that purpose that I should be on the spot. If the paper were going on swimmingly, the very reputation of doing so would have too good an effect even upon our "liberal" readers—I mean those who would not wait till I was well enough to amuse them again. I could then write from Italy on general subjects, and even furnish a letter every week upon my journey there, the state of the country, &c. And, *perhaps*, I might do this with impunity now; but there are subjects starting up every day, which the public are interested in seeing handled in a piquant manner; and though my brother would be the first to say to me "Go," if he thought it necessary for my health, I know he is extremely anxious that I should notice as many of these instantaneous matters as possible; and, remember, I should leave him in prison. He has been there now three months, and has got nine more. His health has wonderfully mended since the paper did. You may imagine that it has been of no disservice to mine; which was the more lucky, inasmuch as we have had nothing but illness in our house for the whole of that period. First, all the children, but John, had the measles; then he came home, and they all had fevers bu Swinburne and Percy; then John fell ill again with an unusual disease, for a child—a violent pleurisy; out of which he rose last week. We are going to send him to Ireland, to Mr. Edgeworth, Miss E.'s brother, who keeps a sort of pet

school, where he brings up the boys himself, after a very reasonable fashion, for 25*l.* a year each. I was delighted to hear that you meant to do honour to poor Keats, and shall take care to notice it publicly without loss of time. Sickness, and the consciousness of being unable to let the reader into your *Prometheus* without saying a good deal, has hitherto prevented my noticing that at all; for which I feel due remorse; and it was not till the other day that I was aware of the existence of the [MS. illegible], which Ollier has never sent me. I shall make up for both these neglects in my *Sketches of the Living Poets*, which I am now writing in the *Examiner*. I give a little biographical sketch of each, as well as a criticism. Will you oblige me by sending me a few dates and mechanical matters, such as birth, parentage, and education? *You* know how I can do justice to all the rest. I took an opportunity, a few weeks back, of mentioning you in one of my political articles, in company with Hazlitt, and in such a way as showed how I valued your heart and genius, as well as his talents. It was nothing of a comparison. I was only mentioning the authors who would and who would not be in a new Literary Royal Academy which they talk of getting up. But those who know Hazlitt's book (not a great many, for he is not popular) will see how little effect these idle fightings with his side of the question have upon *us*. As to the rest, if he attacks you again, I have told him in so many words that he must expect me to be his public antagonist. But I think it pretty certain that he will not, and that, if he speaks of you again, it will even be in another manner. The way in which you talk of him was just what I expected of you. Bessy begs her kindest remembrance. Say for me all the kind things in the world to Marina. I saw Horace Smith before he left us for Italy, but he slipped from me without letting me know when I could see him again, which he promised. Tell him, *in revenge*, that we caught the scarlet fever of him, and that, perhaps, we shall bring it him back again in Tuscany. All good things bless and preserve you!

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.*

Pisa, 26th August, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—Since I last wrote to you, I have been on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna. The result of this visit was a determination, on his part, to come and live at Pisa; and I have taken the finest palace on the Lung' Arno for him. But the material part of my visit consists in a message which he desires me to give you, and which, I think, ought to add to your determination—for such a one I hope you have formed—of restoring your shattered health and spirits by a migration to these "regions mild of calm and serene air."

He proposes that you should come out and go shares with him and me, in a periodical work, to be conducted here; in which each of the contracting parties should publish all their original compositions and share the profits. He proposed it to Moore, but for some reason it was never brought to bear. There can be no doubt that the *profits* of any scheme in which you and Lord Byron engage, must, from various, yet co-operating reasons, be very great. As for myself, I am for the present only a sort of link between you and him, until you can know each other, and effectuate the arrangement; since (to entrust you with a secret which, for your sake, I withhold from Lord Byron) nothing would induce me to share in the profits, and still less, in the borrowed splendour of such a partnership. You and he, in different manners, would be equal, and would bring, in a different manner, but in the same proportion, equal stocks of reputation and success. Do not let my frankness with you, nor my belief that you deserve it more than Lord Byron, have the effect of deterring you from assuming a station in modern literature which the universal voice of my contemporaries forbids me either to stoop or to aspire to. I am, and I desire to be, nothing.

* *Letters from Italy.*

I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey; because there are men, however excellent, from whom we would never receive an obligation, in the worldly sense of the word; and I am as jealous for my friend as for myself. But I suppose that I shall at last make up an impudent face, and ask Horace Smith to add to the many obligations he has conferred on me. I know I need only ask.

I think I have never told you how very much I like your *Amyntas;* it almost reconciles me to translations. In another sense I still demur. You might have written another such a poem as the *Nymphs*, with no access of efforts. I am full of thoughts and plans, and should do something, if the feeble and irritable frame which incloses it was willing to obey the spirit. I fancy that then I should do great things. Before this you will have seen *Adonais*. Lord Byron, I suppose from modesty, on account of his being mentioned in it, did not say a word of *Adonais*, though he was loud in his praise of *Prometheus*, and, what you will not agree with him in, censure of the *Cenci*. Certainly, if *Marino Faliero* is a drama, the *Cenci* is not—but that between ourselves. Lord Byron is reformed, as far as gallantry goes, and lives with a beautiful and sentimental Italian lady, who is as much attached to him as may be. I trust greatly to his intercourse with you, for his creed to become as pure as he thinks his conduct is. He has many generous and exalted qualities, but the canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out.

To M. W. Shelley.

7th September, 1821.

My dear Mary,—Pray thank Shelley, or rather do not, for that kind part of his offer relating to the expenses. I find I have omitted it; but the instinct that led me to do so, is more honourable to him than thanks. I hope you think so. As this letter has been delayed a few days since I wrote it, I have had a specimen of the autumnal change of weather,

and assure you it has not lessened my wish to be in Italy. That ever the time should come, when I had such an offer to visit the country of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and think of refusing it! But so it is: and here is a glimpse of sunshine just burst out as if to coax me into contentment. All sorts of love to you.—Your affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

To P. B. and M. W. SHELLEY.

Hampstead, 21st September, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIENDS,—We are coming. I feel the autumn so differently from the summer, and the accounts of the cheapness of living and education at Pisa are so inviting, that what with your kind persuasions, the proposal of Lord Byron, and last, be sure not least, the hope of seeing you again and trying to get my health back in your society, my brother as well as myself think I had better go. We hope to set off in a month from the date of this letter, not liking to delay our preparation till we hear from you again, on account of the approach of winter; so about the 21st of October we shall all set off, myself, Marianne, and the six children. With regard to the proposed publication of Lord B., about which you talk so modestly, he has it in his power, I believe, to set up not only myself and family in our finances again, but one of the best-hearted men in the world, my brother and his. I allude, of course, to the work in which he proposes me to join him. I feel with you, quite, on the other point, as I always have. I agree to his proposal with the less scruple, because I have had a good deal of experience in periodical writing, and know what the getting up of the *machine* requires, as well as the soul of it. You see I am not so modest as you are by a great deal, and do not mean to let you be so either. What? Are there not three of us? And ought we not to have as much strength and variety as possible? We will divide the world between us, like the Triumvirate, and you shall be the sleeping partner, if you

will; only it shall be with a Cleopatra, and your dreams shall be worth the giving of kingdoms. The Gisbornes tell me of a fine new novel of Marina's, which I long to see. There is something extremely interesting in having a lady's novel in sheets, and not the less so, because there is masculine work as well as feminine; for a novel of hers will have plenty of both, I know. You may imagine how we talked with the Gisbornes, of Italy. It was nothing but a catechism about beef, salad, oil, and education, all day long. But the money, Shelley? You tell me you have "secured" it, and I need not say (sorry as I am for that "need not," knowing your necessities to be only less than mine), that I cannot do without your kindness in this respect. I fear, however, by what you say of Horace S. that your security is stronger in love and faith than matter of fact; but I must not wait to hear from you again, if I can help it. I shall do my best, with my brother's help, to raise the money, and have an impudent certainty that you will help me out with the return of it. God bless you. I could write sheets, in spite of a head burning already with writing, but I must not do it, especially as I mean to get up a good deal of matter during the month to furnish articles for the paper during the journey. The journey too! Which is that to be, by land or water? We have not settled yet, but we are making all sorts of inquiries, and talking of nothing else but Italy, Italy, Italy; where we soon hope to grasp the hands of the best friends in the world. —Your affectionate,

LEIGH HUNT.

Blackwall, 16th November, 1821.

DEAREST FRIENDS,—Here we are in the river Thames, and the brig *Jane*, Captain Whitney, bound direct for Leghorn. We should have sent you notice last week, but you requested us to be particular as to the time of sailing, and the captain, after tantalising us with the usual delays, gave us the call in a hurry. I cannot write much, my head being made already giddy with letters, and even with the motion of the vessel,

such fresh-water sailors are we; but I must say, as some remote hint to an excuse, that there is a gale of wind which would have shown stouter heads sport out at sea, and the weather affects me as well as other things. We are all, however, remarkably well considering, especially as poor Marianne (you will be sorry to hear) was most unfortunately seized with a throwing-up of blood a fortnight ago, and has just got out of bed to come away. But the doctor says she is doing as well as can be expected, and that such a voyage is the best thing in the world for her. You say, Shelley, you thank me for coming. The pleasure of being obliged by those we love is so great that I do not wonder you continue to muster up some obligation to me; but if you are obliged, how much am I? Your own heart must tell you, for I cannot. We are delighted to hear of Mary's good spirits; but did not I detect her lurking faculty of giggle at the theatre, when she sat shaking her white shoulders at "Master Launcelot?" The hope of adding to her stock, and to yours, is (I need not tell you) one of the greatest I have in coming; so God bless you till we arrive, and are all comforts to one another.—Your affectionate friends,

LEIGH HUNT.
MARIANNE.

The children all call out to me to send their love. Marina says she grows younger. I wish I could say as much for myself. I am at least a dozen years older than when I saw you last; but I hope to rejuvenise a little in Italy.

Ramsgate, 6th December, 1821.

DEAREST FRIENDS,—Is not this monstrous? The 6th of December, and not yet got away from the coast! We were obliged to put in here from the Downs yesterday fortnight, owing to contrary winds, and a whole week after going on board, and here have we been kept by the same winds ever since. Our captain is prudent, or he would have gone out of harbour, and been obliged to come back again two or three

times over, as some others have done; so that we dare not trust the weathercock now, though it has been pointing all day to a favourable quarter, and the captain says he will be off to-morrow, if it remains. I fear I have to reproach myself with not writing to you sooner about this delay. I fear that you will fear; especially as Shelley told us of some happy person who was blown to Leghorn in little more than a fortnight. The mate tells me that he himself went from Liverpool to Naples in nineteen days. But these are blasts from heaven. The average passage is five weeks, sometimes six or seven, and it has been known to be twelve; so if we still happen to be a good while, you must not be alarmed out of proportion. A little reasonable anxiety such as is amiable, and will make all our faces still lighter when we meet, I allow you. Alas! I am joking here with great pains in the hypochondries, and with poor Marianne subject to spitting blood—an evil that came upon her only a few weeks before setting out, and which perhaps she might have eluded had the captain sailed as he originally promised us. But we hope much, indeed everything, from the South, and long to be tossing and rolling off the west of Portugal, though we have already found that the sea has its "nervous bores," Marina, as well as the Alps. After waiting in harbour to no purpose day after day, we thought it as well to refresh ourselves with a bed on shore, but we scarcely settled, and got two or three delicious flat chairs to rest upon, when we were called off again. God bless you, dear, dear friends. We endeavour to bear all as we ought to do in the hope of embracing you shortly.—Ever, ever your affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

(*Post Office*), *Dartmouth, 6th January*, 1822.

Well, dearest friends, this letter will be a heavy disappointment to you, as the cause of it has been to us. The wind was fair the day before yesterday; the captain waited his twenty-four hours, and we were all prepared to sail again with a promise of excellent weather (which has lasted), when

Marianne fell so ill, that it was quite impossible to move her, and the ship—the ship—has sailed without us! I can hardly forbear from tears while I write this; but it could not be helped. Marianne, though we could tell from other effects upon her that the sea, of itself, benefited her, was so shaken by the frights and the dangers she underwent during an extraordinary season of storms (sufficient, according to their own confession, to shake the oldest mariners), that when we again came to depart, her fears for her husband and children completely overpowered her, and she fell into an alarming state of weakness and light-headedness, throwing up more blood than before. . . .—Your most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM M. W. SHELLEY.

5th March, 1822.

MY DEAREST MARIANNE,—I hope that this letter will find you quite well, recovering from your severe attack, and looking towards your haven Italy with best hopes. I do indeed believe that you will find a relief here from your many English cares, and that the winds which waft you will sing the requiem to all your ills. It was indeed unfortunate that you encountered such weather on the very threshold of your journey, and as the wind howled through the long night how often did I think of you! At length it seemed as if we should never, never meet; but I will not give way to such a presentiment. We enjoy here divine weather. The sun hot, too hot, with a freshness and clearness in the breeze that bears with it all the delights of spring. The hedges are budding, and you should see me and my friend Mrs. Williams poking about for violets by the sides of dry ditches; she being herself—

> "A violet by a mossy stone
> Half hidden from the eye."

Yesterday, a countryman seeing our dilemma, since the ditch was not quite dry, insisted on gathering them for us, and

when we resisted, saying that we had no *quattrini* (*i. e.* farthings, being the generic name for all money), he indignantly exclaimed, "Oh! se lo faccio per interesse!" How I wish you were with us in our rambles. Our good cavaliers flock together, and as they do not like *fetching a walk with the absurd womankind*, Jane (*i. e.* Mrs. Williams) and I are off together, and talk morality and pluck violets by the way. I look forward to many duets with this lady and Hunt. She has a very pretty voice, and a taste and ear for music which is almost miraculous. The harp is her favourite instrument; but we have none, and a very bad piano; however, as it is, we pass very pleasant evenings, though I can hardly bear to hear her sing "Donne l'amore;" it transports me so entirely back to your little parlour at Hampstead—and I see the piano, the bookcase, the prints, the casts—and hear Mary's *far ha ha-a!*

We are in great uncertainty as to where we shall spend the summer. There is a beautiful bay about fifty miles off, and as we have resolved on the sea, S. bought a boat. We wished very much to go there; perhaps we shall still, but as yet we can find but one house; but as we are a colony, "which moves altogether or not at all," we have not yet made up our minds. The apartments which we have prepared for you in Lord B.'s house will be very warm for the summer; and indeed for the two hottest months I should think that you had better go into the country. Villas about here are tolerably cheap, and they are perfect paradises. Perhaps, as it was with me, Italy will not strike you as so divine at first; but each day it becomes dearer and more delightful; the sun, the flowers, the air, all is more sweet and more balmy than in the Ultima Thule that you inhabit.

The manner in which Leigh Hunt was brought to undertake the journey to Italy develops itself naturally in the ensuing correspondence. I will here simply say that he set sail from London with his family on the 15th November, 1821.

To Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Stonehouse, near Plymouth, 26th March, 1822.

My dearest Friend,—Your letters always contain something delightful to me, whatever news they bring.

"Surgit *amici* aliquid, quod in ipsis *nubibus arridet*."

But I confess your latter ones have greatly relieved me on the subject you speak of. They only make me long, with an extreme Homeric longing, to be at Pisa,—I mean such an one as Achilles felt when he longed to be with his father,—sharp in his very limbs. We have secured a ship, the *David Walter*, which will call for us here, and sets sail from London in a fortnight. I have written by to-day's post with intelligence of it to Mrs. Fletcher, enclosing her the letter, and giving her the option of going on board in London, or here. I need not say we shall attend to her comforts in every respect. The same post also carries a letter to Mr. Gisborne, stating your wishes, and wonders respecting *Adonais*. If it is not published before I leave England, I will publish my criticism upon the Pisa copy,—a criticism which I think you will like. I take the opportunity of showing the public the reason why Gifford's review spoke so bitterly of *Prometheus*, and why it pretends that the most metaphysical passage of your most metaphysical poem is a specimen of the clearness of your general style. The wretched priest-like cunning and undertoned malignity of that review of *Prometheus* is indeed a homage paid to qualities which can so provoke it. The *Quarterly* pretends now, that it never meddles with you personally,—of course it never did! For this, *Blackwood* cries out upon it, contrasting its behaviour in those delicate matters with its own! This is better and better, and the public seem to think so; for these things, depend upon it, are getting better understood every day, and shall be better and better understood every day to come. One circumstance which helps to reconcile me to having been detained on this coast, is the opportunity it has given me to make your works speak for themselves wherever I could; and you are

in high lustre I assure you, with the most intelligent circles in Plymouth, ἀστὴρ ἐφος. I have, indeed, been astonished to find how well prepared people of intelligence are to fall in with your aspirations, and despise the mistakes and rascally instincts of your calumniators. This place, for instance, abounds in *schoolmasters*, who appear, to a man, to be liberal to an extreme and esoterical degree. And such, there is reason to believe, is the case over the greater part of the kingdom, greatly, no doubt, owing to political causes. Think of the consequences of this with the rising generation. I delight in *Adonais*. It is the most Delphic poetry I have seen a long while; full of those embodyings of the most subtle and airy imaginations,—those arrestings and explanations of the most shadowy yearnings of our being—which are the most difficult of all things to put into words, and the most delightful when put. I do not know whether you are aware how fond I am of your song on the Skylark; but you ought, if Ollier sent you a copy of the enlarged *Calendar of Nature*, which he published separately under the title of the *Months*. I tell you this, because I have not done half or a twentieth part of what I ought to have done to make your writings properly appreciated. But I intended to do more every day, and now that I am coming to you, I shall be *totus* in you and yours! For all good, and healthy, and industrious things, I will do such wonders, that I shall begin to believe I make some remote approach to something like a return for your kindness. Yet how can that be? At all events, I hope we shall all be the better for one another's society. Marianne, poor dear girl, is still very ailing and weak, but stronger upon the whole, she thinks, than when she first left London, and quite prepared and happy to set off on her spring voyage. She sends you part of her best love. I told her I supposed I must answer Marina's letter for her, but she is quite grand on the occasion, and vows she will do it herself, which, I assure you, will be the first time she has written a line for many months. Ask Marina if she will be charitable, and write one to me. I will undertake to answer it with one double as long. But what

am I talking about, when the captain speaks of sailing in a fortnight? I was led astray by her delightful letter to Marianne about walks, and duetts, and violets, and ladies like violets. Am I indeed to see and be in the midst of all these beautiful things, ladies like lilies not excepted? And do the men in Italy really leave ladies to walk in those very amiable dry ditches by themselves? Oh! for a few strides like those of Neptune, when he went from some place to some other place, and "did it in three!" Dear Shelley, I am glad my letter to Lord B. pleased you, though I do not know why you should so thank me for it. But you are ingenious in inventing claims for me upon your affection.—Your affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—Speaking of duetts (in which I fear Marina will find me a much worse performer by the side of Mrs. Williams, than her regard for the little parlour makes her paint to her memory), I bring with me some music, among which are three operas of Mozart, for the piano, and a collection of the only songs of Winter published in this country; among the latter is the duett of Vaglillotti, which you said was *too* beautiful and melancholy.

LETTERS FROM ITALY.

The residence at Stonehouse was prolonged unexpectedly. A negotiation had been commenced with more than one shipowner for a passage to Italy. These negotiations failed, however, chiefly through the more serious indisposition of Mrs. Leigh Hunt. Ultimately, however, arrangements were made with the owner and captain of the *David Walter*, of Caermarthen, which sailed from London and called for the party at Plymouth. They embarked on the 13th of May, 1822, and after a voyage of average length and unusual fineness, reached Genoa on the 15th of June; Leigh Hunt immediately communicating the fact to the Shelleys.

To P. B. and M. W. Shelley.

On board the David Walter, *Genoa*,
15*th June*, 1822.

Dearest Friends,—I have only time to tell you that we have just arrived here, after a passage as smooth as the former exordium of one was rough and calamitous. We did not know till we were at sea, that the vessel was to touch at Genoa. She will probably be four or five days, perhaps a week longer, before we set sail for our *home;* but we reckon ourselves arrived now that we have reached the south of Italy; and if anything could console us for this last tantalising

delay, it is the sight of this glorious and at the same time lovely city. The children are all marvellously well, myself full of all sorts of determinations to be as well as anybody, and Marianne in better spirits, though that villanous spitting of blood still continues. But rest—rest—we hope everything from rest. I embrace you both a hundred times, each one warmer than the last. I forgot in my last to notice what Shelley says about his downfall from the angelic state. Does he mean his taking to veal-cutlets, or that he has fallen in love with somebody who does not deserve it? Whatever he means, what has it to do with the hearty embrace I shall give him when we meet? Am I not—oh! how truly I am your affectionate friend.

LEIGH HUNT.

TO PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Genoa, 21st June, 1822.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—I got your letter late to-day, and must write you one on my own part as headlong as my wishes to be with you. How sorry we are to hear of Marina's being so ill; but if the sight of old friends can do her as much good as we believe it will do us, she will be much better shortly. We shall look out for your house; but fear that there is no chance of the captain's being able to put in, if he would. Are we not soon, however, to see you all somehow or other? If not,—but it must be so. A main part of the comfort we promise ourselves in Italy is the bringing some additional pleasure to your society; nor shall we the less succeed, I trust, because we all have need of it. Marianne's sympathy is very truly with Marina; not only because she very truly loves her, but because she is still very ill herself—much more so than you imagine; and as to myself, I have become, since you saw me, an elderly gentleman, with sunken cheeks, and temples that throb at the least touch of emotion, joy especially. But I find I can still give some pleasure to those about me—I have not lost the lucky talent of receiving

more. Upon your principle of "anticipated cognition," I have a right to consider Mr. and Mrs. Williams as old friends of ours as well as yours, and hereby give them notice that I have known them for ten years to come. I shook Mr. Williams by the hand but two hours ago, gave Mrs. Williams as hearty a salute, which nobody wondered at, even though I had known her so long. You see I am already drunk with the climate. Why are we not with you even now? . . . .—Your ever affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

The vessel was detained at Genoa to discharge part of its cargo, and it did not reach Leghorn until the beginning of July. All the troubles of the voyage now seemed over. The family landed, and took up their temporary abode at an inn, where they were joined by Shelley, the two friends being enraptured at their meeting, and at the prospect of continued intercourse for years in the land that they both so ardently admired. Lord Byron was visited at Monte Nero. He had already taken the Palazzo Villa Franca, at Pisa, and in a short time all the party were assembled in that ancient town. Shelley spent a short time with his friends in Pisa. I well remember his reading aloud some passages from Plato to my father, partly in admiration, and partly with some sense of oddity in the passages, which I now forget. He then took leave, and embarked in his yacht, the *Don Juan*, with Captain Williams, and, I think, one sailor, for Lerici, to fetch Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams. The fate of the voyagers is well known, and I have explained in the later edition of the *Autobiography*, the manner in which the calamity was probably brought about by the attempt of some Italian boatmen to board the yacht, with the hope of obtaining booty. When Leigh Hunt was looking for the return

of Shelley, Trelawny arrived in great agitation and excitement inquiring for the voyagers. Anxiety was soon converted into a fatal certainty, and this brief letter to Trelawny shows how his movements of inquiry along the coast were watched from Pisa.

To Edward Trelawny.

Pisa, 16th July, 1822.

Dear Sir,—Pray send us some word respecting the state the ladies are in, and let us know whether the presence of old friends would still be more painful than consoling to Mrs. Shelley; whether the sight of her husband's new acquaintance would still be too much for Mrs. Williams, &c. &c.; in short, all that you can tell us in this distracting state of suspense.—Yours, dear sir, sincerely,

Leigh Hunt.

8 *O'clock, p.m., 17th July.*

Lord Byron talks of inviting the ladies over here; and there are their lodgings, too. Pray contrive to see if they cannot come. We have just returned (Lord B., Captain Roberts, and myself,) from making an inquiry at the mouth of the Serchio about a body lately buried. It is certainly not dear Shelley, nor does it appear to be Mr. Williams.

To Mary Shelley.*

Pisa, 20th July.

Dearest Mary,—I trust you will have set out on your return from that dismal place, before you receive this. You will also have seen Trelawny. God bless you, and enable us

* Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams had arrived in Pisa, and taken up their abode at a house nearly opposite the Casa la Franco on the other side of the Arno.

all to be a support for one another. Let us do our best, if it is only for that purpose. It is easier for me to say that I will do it, than for you: but whatever happens, this I can safely say, that I belong to those whom Shelley loves, and that all which it is possible for me to do for them, now and ever, is theirs. I will grieve with them, endure with them, and, if it be necessary, work for them while I have life.—Your most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Marianne sends you a thousand loves, and longs, with myself, to try whether we can say or do one thing that can enable you and Mrs. Williams to bear up a little better. But we rely on your great strength of mind.

Monday, 21st July.

MY DEAR MARY,—Will you let the bearer know whether you can see me now, or whether I shall wait longer? I have persuaded Marianne to let me come alone first.—Your affectionate

LEIGH HUNT.

The remainder of the correspondence speaks for itself. The greater part of it was addressed to the writer's sister-in-law. Much of it related to purely literary questions, and considerable portions, which have lost their interest, have been omitted.

To ELIZABETH KENT.

2nd July, 1822.

BESSY MIA,—Our sea troubles and your sea fears are now all over. I say *now*, because while I write this, I cannot help pitching myself into your feelings at the moment you receive it. We arrived at Leghorn yesterday. It happened to be no post-day, so that I could not write, but you only receive a

longer letter for the delay. We had a long passage—two nights, a day, and an evening; and that we might have a taste of every sort of sea variety, shipwreck excepted, we had a summer storm of thunder and lightning the second night, the lightning the grandest and most energetic I ever beheld. Sometimes it shot in successive wide flashes across half the horizon; sometimes ran downward into the sea like a great thick fiery serpent; at another time, bent like a great leg and knee from heaven, as if it were the leg of a god; and at another, shot down at once in a perpendicular line, though still thick, like a pillar of flame, or rather like a tongue of melted fire dropt from a torch. The flashes were not dangerous; but this was, and had it struck on the ship, might have left us a very melancholy story *not* to tell. On this occasion, as well as some others, which have occurred since I saw you, I was restored to my self-respect respecting courage; for I saw how sailors could be alarmed at things to which their imagination had not been accustomed, and I found that none of my former feelings had been singular even to the bravest of the profession. But yesterday I had a still more novel opportunity of putting my pulses to the test; and now that I was alone, and had not a family in my very eye to suffer for, they did not beat an atom. Listen to a bit of Italian nonsense. When I landed, I rode in one of the country carriages to Lord Byron's, who received me with the most marked cordiality, and then told me that I had come, as before, at an eventful period, for that he and some friends with him were in a state of blockade. [Here he narrates that well-known domestic *fracas* between a German courier, Count Gamba, and an Italian servant of Lord B.'s, in which the latter, after wounding the Count, threatening to shoot Lord B., or any one who might issue from the house, ended by bursting into tears, and wishing to embrace his master.] This story has unworthily taken up almost all my paper, or I should have filled it with accounts of this beautiful country, and written something further for Novello, as well as yourself, about the great peculiarity of Genoa,—its streets full of

palaces—which I omitted in my letter to him, I suppose, because they had taken away my breath. Tell him this, and that we are going on as before, and that I shall write again shortly. Be good enough also to let my brother know that we have arrived at Leghorn, and that I shall write to him by next post. Everything is going on *promisingly*. I am expecting Shelley's arrival every instant from the country, where he has been living during the heats. Mrs. Shelley has been very ill, and continues very weak.

Dearest Bessy, I thought of you many times yesterday during my half-an-hour's ride to Lord B.'s country-house. You remember how we used to look at the poor little vignettes in the *Parnaso Italiano*, and fancy Italy. You cannot conceive—yes, you can,—how delightful it was to find a number of features exactly the same, though greatly heightened in beauty. The roads and hedges are full of vines, fig-trees, and olives; that is to say, the hedges of vines, and the garden-walls overtopped with the olive and fig-tree. Lord B. goes with us in a day or two to Pisa. I dare not dwell upon the wish I have that you were with us, lest it should make you still more painfully impatient for the time to arrive; and I know how much pain you have gone through. Be sure that the end of the road is a happy one. I shall begin looking out for your Pisa lodging almost as soon as I get there. *Mille baci, mille et mille volte.*—Your ever friend of friends. L. H.

Your sister's distressing spitting of blood still continues, but it is decidedly affected by the greater or less *alarms* which she goes through, and we still hope everything from our Pisan repose. My head is not at its best; but then I have been obliged to live in a way that does not suit me, and the Pisa provisions will mend it. The children are all surprisingly well.

I must not forget to say that I liked your tales extremely, and that they get better and better towards the conclusion. They add to my sense of your companionship—of your

possession of a mind to interchange with one. When will you be ready to pay your visit?

Pisa, 8th July, 1822.

DEAREST BESSY MINE,—I was at the Cathedral service with Shelley on Sunday, and saw finer faces than in Genoa, and S. says these are surpassed by those in Rome. The *general* aspect of the women in Italy is striking, but not handsome; that is to say; stronger-marked and more decided, than pleasing. But when you do see fine faces, they are fine indeed; and they have all an intelligence and absence of affectation, very different from that idea of foreigners which the French are apt to give people. But you know the difference without having seen them. They are very like what you think. They have your own cast of figure; and the veils they wear give them such an air of the picturesque as you might expect in a painting and sculpturing in action. I have been outside of three gates of Pisa, and they all step at once upon the country, —roads of trees *with vines hanging down from one to the other in festoons*. Imagine my pleasure in realizing the description in the story of *Rimini*. Lord B. has got an entirely new set of servants, having grown reasonably suspicious of the others after the late adventure; and we are all quietly housed here: ourselves on the ground-floor, and he and his fair friend (a Countess Guiccioli, who is separated from her husband, and is handsome, and, I daresay, amiable) in the rooms above us. The Gambas, owing to a late notice of the Tuscan Government (for they are ex-revolutionists and exiles) have gone to Lucca for the present; otherwise they reside with him, and Madam Guiccioli is their daughter and sister,—so you see how lightly the Italians think of certain heavy English matters. Indeed, the difference altogether on those points is great and most good-natured. They do not like *profligacy* and a certain worldliness of proceeding; but they draw distinction with great kindness and philosophy.

Though not ill, the change of climate has affected me at first with a lethargic tendency, which you will easily imagine

I shall get over for our new work, especially since Lord B. enters into it with great ardour. He has given directions to Murray to put a variety of MS. into the hands of my brother John for it, and Shelley has some excellent MS. ready also. The title, I believe, will be the *Hesperides;*—but you will have the first number shortly. You may announce the title at once, for I think it certain. It is Lord Byron's own. Lord B. made me a present the other day of a satire on Southey, called the *Vision of Judgment*, which my brother has accordingly to get from the hands of Murray, and print for our mutual benefit; but I write to him by the present post to say that he had better put it in the first number of the *Hesperides*, if it be not already published by him. You like the title of the *Hesperides;*—do you not?

Our ground-floor is not so splendidly furnished as people gave out, but very nicely, and is very cool indeed, considering that the summer is so hot, and Pisa reckoned so hot in summer. We have plenty of rooms; plenty of room and distance for the children; and I have a study, as of old, with the garden trees *yellowing* the windows, and only wanting the addition of your company to complete old associations. (I hear Lord B. coming to see me, but shall continue to write on.—He has been, and taken some books out of my book-case, and gone again, after discovering two or three theories in almost as many minutes.) . . . . Your sister and the children send their love, and thanks for your books, which they like much. I am looking out for a good long letter from you, impatiently. Tell the Novellos of us, and tell yourself a hundred times a-day, that I am ever your most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Pisa, 20th July, 1822.

DEAREST BESSY,—Your sister is as well as she can be expected to be; so am I, and the children; all which I tell you at once, at the head of my letter, lest the frightful note I am compelled to strike up, should affect you still more than it

must. Good God! how shall I say it? My beloved friend Shelley,—my dear, my divine friend, the best of friends and of men—he is no more. I know not how to proceed for anguish; but you need not be under any alarm for me. Thank Heaven! the sorrows I have gone through enable me to bear this; and we all endeavour to bear it as well as possible for each other's sakes, which is what he, the noble-minded being, would have wished. Would to God I could see him—his spirit—sitting this moment by the table. I think it would no more frighten me than the sight of my baby,—whom I kiss and wonder why he has not gone with him.

He was returning to Lerici by sea with his friend Captain Williams, who is said also to have been a most amiable man, and appeared so. It was on the 8th. A storm arose; and it is supposed the boat must have foundered not far from home. The bodies were thrown up some days after. Dear S. had retained a book in his pocket, which he told me he would not part with till he saw me again,—Keats's last publication. He borrowed it to read as he went. It will be buried with him: that is to say, it is so already, on the sea-shore; but if he is taken up to be buried elsewhere, it shall go with him. Mr. Williams, too, left a wife, who was passionately fond of him. Conceive the terrible state in which the women are;—but none of us, I trust, have known Shelley for nothing: the Williams's doted on him; and—I know not what to say; but rely upon me, I fear nothing. I am cooler in general than while writing this, and besides the patience to which I have been accustomed, I must work hard for our new publication, which will still go on. Lord B. is very kind.

Pray, show or send Hogg this letter for him to see; and tell him I would have written him a separate one, but at present I am sure he will spare it me. I had already begun to enliven Shelley's hours with accounts of his pleasant sayings, and hoped to—but, good God! how are one's most confident expectations cut short! I embrace him, as my friend, and Shelley's.

Adieu, dearest Bessy, you will not wonder that I do not

make this letter an answer to your last, which I was delighted to receive. It showed me you were well, and Henry out of danger.

Pray, send the following to my brother for the *Examiner*. —Your ever most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Albaro, near Genoa, October, 1822.

DEAREST BESSY,— . . . . I have a few myrtle leaves for you, which I took from the garden of Shelley's house near Lerici, for it was there he was living; and there I saw those melancholy rooms, to which he was returning, and did not return. The house is on the very edge of the sea, and had been a convent of Jesuits. I saw the waves foaming and roaring at the foot, and with an impatience which has seldom gone so far with me, could almost have blasphemously trampled at them, and cried out. But we must all comfort one another's hearts, and hope for the best. I try to do as he would wish me to do; and those wishes enable me to do pretty well. Do not fear: I am not ill again, and am disposed to take and to hope for all the comfort that you can give me! but it is hard to have hoped so much as I did from his company and what I could have done for it, and to miss it all. I have no companion now; and I have several reasons why I do not wish to seek new ones; but I long for your society again, being sure, from all that you have borne and shown yourself capable of meanwhile, that it would have all its sweets for me and none of its mistakes. To return to Lerici. Lord B. fell ill there, which detained us some days; and when we left him, on his getting better, intending to go by sea as far as Sestri (which was necessary on account of the broken condition of the new road making between Lerici and that place), the mariners put into the first port they came to, a few miles distance, pretending that it was impossible to proceed. . . . .

Our journey from Sestri to Genoa you may guess from what I have told you: but if you were to see our new house, or

rather mansion, you would never guess what we pay for it: to wit, under 20*l.* a year for about forty rooms; and other living is still cheaper here than in Pisa. You, with your bird appetite, would live here for a fraction; and, indeed, with a very different appetite, a single person's cost is scarcely anything. Do not imagine, therefore, I am much distressed for money. I am distressed, to a certain extent, because the money at present does not come from myself; but it soon will do so: and above all, you must know that postage is nothing like what it is in England, going or coming. (I see your face at this:—I'll do what is right, depend upon it.) Our house would be fit for a nobleman in England: it has marble steps to the staircase, and a marble terrace over the portico. Imagine the Alpha cottages all turned into mansions, with gardens in profusion. Such is the whole of Albaro, a hill near Genoa, about a mile and a half distant. Lord B. lives close to us, with the Gambas, in a palace. Since I wrote last, he is again for the Magazine plan, and I have written to my brother accordingly. . . . .

To Arthur and Alistasia Gliddon.

Pisa, 10th September, 1822.

Dear Friends (in your pleasant little parlour),—I am writing in a room of just the same shape and size, so you must not think I am coming over you with the importance of our great big house. At the farther end, on my right, is my book-case; between the book-case and me, a sofa against the wall; opposite me and my writing-table, the door into the parlour; and on my left hand, close to me, a window, bordered with ivy and orange leaves, and looking at a white bathing-room, bordered with a weeping willow. You will say, how delightful! Alas! it would have been so; but you know the late terrible calamity we have sustained—the most dreadful of all our troubles since we left you. I cannot now feel a pleasure come over me but it is cut short in the midst with a bitter sigh. There is not a scene, a book, a green leaf,—but I had hoped

he would enjoy it with me; and now, pray, let me hear *from* you again next time, and not merely of you: for it is hard, if upon the strength of the new work (which promises abundantly, and is just on the eve of appearing) I cannot afford to receive comfort from all those who are disposed to give it me. The living here is extremely cheap. What do you think of the finest large grapes, exactly a halfpenny a pound? What of eleven of the finest peaches for three halfpence? Thirty or forty apricots are to be had for three farthings;—they are three halfpence a gallon. Half-pint glass tumblers, that would cost in England one shilling and sixpence a piece, are a penny halfpenny. Twelve eggs are fourpence halfpenny; beef and veal, both excellent, threepence and fourpence a pound; sixteen fresh figs are three farthings; three quarts of oil two shillings and ninepence; and a quart of the best native wine, extremely pleasant and wholesome, about threepence halfpenny. Then, not to omit some articles exclusively lady-like, "sarsnet, such as would be in England 9–5 inches wider than the widest" (I draw upon my wife for these learned particulars) is three and sixpence; and velvet, "such as would cost in England per yard fifteen or sixteen shillings," five shillings. In fine, to conclude with an article very important to myself, twenty-five good quills are sixpence. Now, what do you and all other dear friends say to coming over without more ado, setting up shop, pianoforte, and profession, and eating grapes instantly, as many as you can cram into your mouths? There are "bunie walks" also in plenty, with grapes growing in festoons all the way; and absolution is as cheap as apricots. We are going to move to Genoa, but that does not signify; we shall only be on the road to meet you. Ah! how pleasant must the recollection of one's friends be, if they can make me, even for the space of ten minutes, forget such a loss as I have sustained, and resume some of my old rattling. Observe, however, in sober earnest, I still hope to see in Italy all those who talked of being there some day or other. Tell this to Novello, and say that I trust he does not admit a single doubt

of it to his own mind. God bless you! Tell me particularly how your health is when you write. My own is much better than it would be in England, but not the stouter, as you may guess, for these late demands upon one's patience. But hope, Hope, is still my motto, for it ought to be the world's; and those whom we are not to see again on this earth, I trust most confidently, as well as earnestly, to join hearts with in a better place.—Your affectionate friend,

L. H.

Marianne begs her kindest remembrances. She is much better at last, though still very weak, and subject to dreadful headaches.

To Horace Smith.

Pisa, 25th July, 1822.

Dear Horace,—I trust that the first news of the dreadful calamity which has befallen us here will have been broken to you by report, otherwise I shall come upon you with a most painful abruptness; but Shelley, my divine-minded friend, your friend, the friend of the universe, he has perished at sea. He was in a boat with his friend Captain Williams, going from Leghorn to Lerici, when a storm arose, and it is supposed the boat must have foundered. It was on the 8th instant, about four or five in the evening, they guess. A fisherman says he saw the boat a few minutes before it went down: he looked again and it was gone. He saw the boy they had with them aloft furling one of the sails. We hope his story is true, as their passage from life to death will then have been short; and what adds to the hope is, that in S.'s pocket (for the bodies were both thrown on shore some days afterwards,—conceive our horrible certainty, after trying all we could to hope!) a copy of Keats's last volume, which he had borrowed of me to read on his passage, was found *open* and doubled back as if it had been thrust in, in the hurry of a surprise. God bless him! I cannot help thinking of him as if he were alive as much as ever, so unearthly he

always appeared to me, and so seraphical a thing of the elements; and this is what all his friends say. But, what we all feel, your own heart will tell you.

I am only just stronger enough than Mrs. S. at present to write you this letter; but shall do very well. Our first numbers will shortly appear; though this, like everything else, however important to us, looks like an impertinence just now. God bless you. Mrs. H. sends her best remembrances to you and Mrs. Smith, and so does your obliged and sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

It has been often feared that Shelley and Captain Williams would meet with some accident, they were so hazardous; but when they set out on the 8th, in the morning it was fine. Our dear friend was passionately fond of the sea, and has been heard to say he should like it to be his death-bed.

I think Mrs. S. told me yesterday that she should like to be informed of anything you may happen to know respecting his affairs. I can spare you a morsel of a lock of his hair, if you have none.

Albaro, near Genoa, 9th April, 1823.

DEAR HORACE,—I am sure you will think the maxim of "better late than never" a very good one, when you see the enclosed lock of hair. You know whose it is. I cannot bear yet to put his name down upon paper more than I can help; and this is my best excuse for not having written sooner. With regard to himself, who left me so far behind in this as well as in other qualities, I am confident he must have written to you on the subject you spoke of. I have a strong recollection that he mentioned it to me. I know that you were one of the last persons he spoke of, and in a way full of kindness and acknowledgment. This country has been such a melancholy one to me, since he has gone, that I have nothing pleasant to tell you of it. I only wish to God you were here to make it pleasanter, and that you might see how hard I continue to work, in spite of a bruised head and heart, to

make up for carelessness of old. I hope this letter will find Mrs. Smith's health restored, and my little acquaintances perfectly well. Mrs. Hunt is in the way to add another to yours, the only way, according to the physician, to save her own health from utter ruin after a dreadful shattering. I hope you received copies of the *Liberal* in return for the *Paris Review*, which I guess came from you. I conclude also that it is you who have shown so much attention to my writings in them. For this and for all, dear Horace, many thanks.—Your ever obliged and sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

To JOSEPH SEVERN.

Genoa, 3rd February, 1823.

MY DEAR SEVERN,—Many, many thanks for your kindness, which I am sure must have been as painful to yourself as it was attentive to those whom you have gratified. Mrs. Shelley begs me to say how gratified she is on her part. I am at present resting from overwork with a head that can hardly hold itself up, but in the course of a few days I intend to send a letter of thanks to each of the gentlemen who were kind enough to attend, at which time also I shall send off another to yourself longer than this. How delighted I shall be to see you on the occasion you mention, or long before if possible; a pleasure I may the more hope for, as we move to Florence before next winter. Why couldn't you settle there at the same time, for a while at least, and let us paint-ize, and poet-ize, and music-ize to our heart's content, if, alas! our hearts can ever be contented. But I will talk to you about fifty things in my next. I expect *Liberals* every day by a vessel, having none here; of course I always intended copies of them for you. Think of Florence, pray: I shall ring it into your ears whenever I write.

I was not sorry on one account to find from a letter of Mr. Freeborn, which Mrs. S. received yesterday, that in the hurry of some former communication she had given him directions to have the inscription on the box repeated on the

tombstone, for I saw that you would of necessity waive the one I sent you, so that it would at least be delayed,—and there was a mistake in the Latin of it; instead of *cor cordiun* it should be *cor cordium*. I do not know whether you include in the list of your accomplishments, if accomplishment it is to be called, which any fellow can achieve, but having been a reader of Latin for many years, and well thumped into it at school, I feel enough interest in my scholarly reputation to be glad that such a blunder of mine has not been exhibited in broad daylight, especially in record of one who was as excellent a scholar as he was excellent in everything else. I must say also that the word *heart* occurs, as you may know, numberless times in all sorts of writers, but I do not recollect ever meeting, even in the poets (who are my only Latin acquaintances), with the genitive case plural of hearts, *cordium;* and from the nature of the nominative I concluded the case might end otherwise. After all my search for the word I found it in an index to a dictionary. Mrs. S. writes by this post to Mr. Freeborn to say that she prefers having this inscription to the one on the box, which, in fact, was only a bare historical record, merely fit to be put under ground like that of a coin. The other conveys a sentiment, and may reasonably supply the place of a better or more complete one (including the talents of dear S. as well as his noble heart), till a more worthy monument be set up. I hope to be in Rome next winter to see about the latter. God bless you, dear Severn, till my next, and ever, ever, with all the good things worthy of your talents and affections, your obliged and sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—I am ashamed to say, that owing to a curious series of circumstances, some of them very painful ones, I have not seen any of your paintings in the exhibitions. But I know the sweet faces of your Albano women at Novello's, and will know the rest if you will tell me where to get at them.

Genoa, 7th November, 1822.

DEAREST BEBS MINE,—Do not be startled at my returning your bank bill. I would have kept it had I been in want of it, hardly as I know it must have been earned; for not to have done so, would have been harder for you to bear. But you will be delighted to hear that we do *not* want it, and that our prospects of getting free from all embarrassment brighten every day. My brother had just sent me word that I could draw on him for 100*l.*, which indeed I was very glad to do, though I could always procure what I wanted from Lord B., and living here is divinely cheap. So turn your money, dearest Bessy, to your own account; and even kiss money, once in your life, before it goes, for it has been against the lips of your grateful friend. These, and your love of so many good things in nature, are the traits in your character which always made it loveable to those who could see through your former infirmities of temper into the natural goodness of your heart; and it is these, and your sufferings and regrets on account of these infirmities,—to say nothing of the habit of connection,—which always makes me count you among the great objects for which I live, and labour, and hope. To see my family not likely to be left destitute,—to see your sister well,—and to have you again with us, helping her, and reaping (for so you would think it) the reward of all you have got rid of, and all you have so well retained and *sus*tained; these, together with my old irrepressible interest in behalf of Poles and Greeks, are my three great desiderata, and it shall want nothing on my part to obtain them all. If it is too late in the year for you to come over the mountains now, with their torrents and snows, you can no longer doubt of your ability to come over in the spring: for we are all "realizing," it seems, as Lord Byron says, and I am certain that I shall be well able to give you the money for your journey then. Therefore say to yourself *this instant*, and as many future instants as you please,—"With the early spring I certainly go to Italy." "Certainly, to Italy, to Italy, the land of perpetual sunshine, and fruits, and flowers, and

mountain walks, and Petrarch, and Ariosto, and Boccaccio, and now (never least of all to *me*) the land of my dear friend." Say this, and go and dine with an infinite air of dignity and cheerfulness, and go to sleep *ditto*, and get up *ditto*, and write as much about flowers meanwhile as you please for your amusement and by way of cultivating both sweet peas and patience.

I think you have done very well with your book, considering what booksellers are. I have no doubt, both from the nature of the subject and the pains you have taken with it, that they will find they have made a very cheap purchase; for the work absolutely fills up a gap in the flowery world, and fills it very prettily too. You can also improve every edition of it, in a very pleasant manner. Take care to have your preface printed last, in case you wish to add anything. Among the cultivators of flowers, and professed ones too, I have found Lambert, the republican general, who amused himself with them during his imprisonment after the restoration. You did well to rescue Virgil from misrepresentation in his vegetables. By the freaks that unconscientious translators play with their authors, in matters where it is our particular business to look narrowly, we may judge what infidels they are in others: *traditori*, not *traduttori*. There's my nine-and-twentieth Italian pun for you. Here the correspondent insinuateth a praise of his own fidelity in translation.

You see I write in spirits, I do so even though I never know what a mirthful thought is, but I think of dear, dear Shelley, and the want of his presence comes over me like a chill. But if anything belonging to us can touch him now, as I hope and believe it can, he longs as much for our well-being; I e ardently desired to see going on what is now going on, and this reconciles me to a thousand things.

As to my way of life, I rise early, write the best part of the morning, often take a walk before dinner to Genoa, and sit after dinner and read, or go and walk with Lord B. in his garden; and generally read to myself, though now and then

aloud, in the evening, though sometimes he comes over, and sometimes I go to him; but I am always in bed by ten, albeit Mrs. S. when she is with us looketh not satisfied therewith, but wisheth us to sit up. She suffers, and more too I suspect than she seems.—Your ever affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

22nd November, 1822.

DEAREST BEDS,— . . . Lord B., in some idle moment of spleen, had been saying something about us in a letter to Murray; and Murray, it seems, has been exaggerating,—for so Lord B. says he must have done. He is sorry for it, and says (as, indeed, I know) that he has spoken in the handsomest manner of us to many persons, and in a MS., to which Murray himself might have referred; but he ought to have cut the matter short by saying as much now in public. This, however, he is not bold enough to do. He has the best natural disposition I have no doubt in the world; but a variety of circumstances have brought upon him the most deplorable weaknesses, as Shelley had reason to find out, and so have I. . . . . God bless you, prays your ever affectionate friend,

L. H.

Genoa, 20th December, 1822.

DEAREST BESSY,— . . . . I have been extremely chagrined at seeing a paragraph, in which there is a passing skit at Sir William [Knighton], copied from the *Chronicle* into the *Examiner*. Pray be good enough to write a note to my brother or Henry, stating this, and that they will particularly oblige me by admitting no mention of Sir William's name into the paper; firstly, because he is my friend, has called himself so, and proved himself so; and secondly, because I verily believe that if he does exercise any influence over the personage alluded to, it is of a kind suitable to the goodness and liberality of his disposition. What the King's private conduct may have been of late I know not; and Sir William

never opened his lips to me respecting his conduct, private or public, except one time, some years ago, when he told me that I should like him very much if I knew him. But from what I gather by the papers, the evidences that have escaped of his political feelings of late have by no means been any of his worst. Be this as it may, and knowing only what I do of him, I like the servant as much as I object to the master; and I am sure my brother will do nothing in the business to hurt my feelings. As many patriotic denouncements as he pleases of kings and their faults; but pray let him spare "my friend and my physician."—I will thank you to copy out the above remarks on the subject, and send them to the *Examiner* office. Sir W. also, when you next have an opportunity of conferring with him, will perhaps like to know as much. Pray, also give him to understand, that I found myself so hampered with that voluntary promise I made him, in the inability I felt how to show him a sense of his kindness (of abstaining from certain *jocose* modes of handling a certain subject), that, notwithstanding all the reserve I made respecting the continuance of the graver objections, I found it impossible altogether to abide by it, and the more so because of circumstances that made me even still more wish to oblige him. The fact is, I had no right to put either him or myself in the dilemma; but I really did not know what to do, at the time, with the excess of my feelings. Tell him all these last words literally,—and all the rest, if you please. But as to himself, *add* that I would sooner break up all my connections with the press at once than ever see his name disrespectfully treated, and not interfere, as far as is compatible with his own feelings. Your sister and I send him our affectionate respects. If you do not see him, write to him.

Your sister, considering that her frightful spitting of blood continues, and that the weather here is miraculously *cold*, holds up remarkably well; but certainly she shall not pass another winter so far north.—A thousand embraces from your ever affectionate friend,

L. H.

Before the year 1822 had passed, reports came back of remarks made by Leigh Hunt's surviving coadjutor, indicating that he was no more satisfied with the alliance under the *Liberal*, than he was afterwards under the Greek flag. It is no part of our present purpose to enter into that closed controversy. It is enough to say that all who knew Lord Byron personally, while thoroughly understanding the consequence of a fickleness nurtured by an excessively bad training,—that of a boy of fortune, with an impulsive and passionate nature, brought up among strangers, with traditions of wild life in his family—remember, also, that he had a strong sympathy with all that was beautiful and generous, strong tendencies of natural affection, and unquestionably a desire to do right. One of his besetting weaknesses was the excessive anxiety for approval.

This betrayed him into impulsive courses, which he afterwards found a difficulty in sustaining, and his extravagant disappointment exhibited itself in ways which made him seem far more uncertain and changeful than he really was at heart. If any one wished to know the best side of Lord Byron's character, he would see it when he had entered into the most familiar and secluded intercourse with him; or, perhaps, still more vividly would he see it in the letters of the noble bard's sister. For no man could have been without admirable qualities largely developed, who habitually received communications so tender-hearted and so trusting. Perhaps the friend whose character had most touched him of all others was Shelley; and, curiously enough, one of the acts in which Byron showed the seriousness of his regard for his lost friend lay in refusing a gift of money from the departed. He writes to Leigh Hunt on the 28th of June, 1823:—

There was something about a legacy of two thousand pounds which he has left me. This, of course, I decline, and the more so that I hear that his will is admitted valid; and I state this distinctly, that—in case of anything happening to me—my heirs may be instructed not to claim it.—Yours ever most truly,

N. B.

No doubt this act sprang from the serious sense which he entertained of Shelley's generosity, and from a desire to return it towards those whom Shelley loved. For Lord Byron knew that the widowed wife was left suddenly alone, and that those of her friends who were willing to give her their support were weak, while some, who were richer, lacked the will. To dismiss the subject once for all, it may be remarked, that if disappointment and the fervour of a new literary work, —which often draws the pen beyond its original intention,—led Leigh Hunt into a book which was too severe, perhaps too one-sided in its view, he himself afterwards corrected the one-sidedness, and recalled to mind the earlier and undoubtedly the more correct impression he had had of Lord Byron. For experience does not always give us more knowledge; sometimes it takes from the knowledge which we receive through simpler and more natural channels. The spirit in which Leigh Hunt first met the hostile gossip is shown in a letter to his nephew, who represented him in the *Examiner* office:—

To Henry Leigh Hunt.

Albaro, near Genoa, 14th November, 1822.

My dear Henry,—Thank you for the zeal with which you thought it necessary to take notice of the gossip you speak of; but do not trouble yourself about it another time. If one person, violating the confidence of a splenetic moment of Lord

Byron's, endeavours to turn one or two idle phrases of his to our injury (the epithets his lordship himself makes use of), persons of respectability could give an account, if they pleased, of twenty speeches from the same quarter to very different purpose. But we render trifles of this kind important by attending to them. The feelings with which the corrupt and hypocritical of all classes must view Lord Byron's connection with the *Liberal* are obvious; and the best answer we can make, is to show them that the connection continues, and that the second number will have all the same reasons for putting them in a passion as the first.

This is quite as much Lord Byron's opinion as my own. His lordship presents his compliments to your father, and will thank him, when he returns from the country, to attend to that matter he spoke of, as soon as convenience will allow.—Your affectionate uncle,

LEIGH HUNT.

To ELIZABETH KENT.

Albaro, April, 1823.

BEBS MINE,— . . . . I am rejoiced to hear of your book [the *Flora Domestica*]. It comes out at the right time—*May*. You will have received, by this, two letters which I wrote last week to you, in the latter of which I have anticipated your urgency about the motto. Depend upon it that this sudden haste on the part of Taylor and Hessey is owing to what I there tell you about the other publication which is announced, and which perhaps you were not aware of. Have you got a passage in Thomson's *Spring*, beginning—

"No gradual bloom is wanting," &c. &c.

down to

"The breath of Nature and her endless bloom."

Perhaps *this* would do for your English motto, in behalf of a better. The first line, I think, is very much in point,—and the list of flowers would give your very title-page a certain

anticipative abundance and perfume. Quote in your preface, if you have it not already, what is said in the *Travels of Anacharsis* about the Greek's love of flowers. It is very necessary. (*Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis*, tom. v. p. 11: "Après avoir traversé une basse-cour," &c., down to "qui sont enlevées à l'instant.") I do not quote you the whole here, the book being so easy to get at: I can fill up my paper better. Pray add also, if you have time, that Ovid, as might be expected, was a great lover of gardens, and appears by a passage in one of his poems to have been fond of writing in them. It is in his *Tristia*, where he is regretting, during his voyage to the place of his exile, the delight he used to feel in composing his verses under the genial sky and among the domestic comforts of his native country.

> "Non hæc in nostris, ut quondam, scribimus hortis,
> Nec, consuete, meum, lectule, corpus habes:
> Jactor in indomito brumali luce profundo,
> Ipsaque cœruleis charta feritur aquis.
> Improba pugnat hiems, indignaturque, quod ausim
> Scribere, se rigidas incutiente minas."
>
> *Lib.* I. *Eleg.* 11.

> "Not in my garden, as of old, I write,
> With thee, dear couch, to finish the delight:
> I toss upon a ghastly, wintry sea;
> While the blue sprinkles dash my poetry.
> Fell winter's at his war; and storms the more
> To see me dare to write for all his threatening roar."

Ovid is so fond of flowers, that in the account of the *Rape of Proserpine* in his *Fasti*, he devotes several lines to the enumeration of the flowers gathered by her attendants. Mr. Gibbon is very angry with him for it (*Miscellaneous Works*), but surely this loitering of the poet over his meadows and crocuses, conveys a fit sense of the pleasure enjoyed by Proserpine and her nymphs; a pleasure, too, for which they expressly came forth, and by the too great pursuit of which the latter were separated from their mistress.

You need very little more of Mavrocordato (Mav, mind,

with a *v*, not an *u*), except that he *is* one of the chief leaders of the Greeks in their present glorious struggle for freedom. Perhaps you may put it thus :—Among the *existing* lovers of flowers, it is a pleasure to be able to name the gallant and accomplished young prince, Alexander Mavrocordato, one of the chief leaders of the Greeks in their present glorious struggle for freedom. A botanical work not long since published in Italy is dedicated to him, on account of his known fondness for the subject. Thus, in every respect, he inherits the feelings of his ancestors. This is the same prince to whom Mr. Shelley dedicated his *Hellas*.—Ever your most affectionate friend,

L. H.

Albaro, 22nd May, 1823.

Dearest Bess,—Thank you for your kindness in writing out those long criticisms. You guessed rightly that they would gratify me. Justice is done both to Shelley's and my intentions, which is a great thing ; and very handsome things said of our poetry to boot; though, with the proper vanity of a poet, I still retain my own opinion as to some other matters. It is hard to be put after Southey and some others. I think myself as much superior to Southey as I am inferior to Wordsworth. . . . . At the same time, I am very sincere in thinking my poetical faculty inferior to Wordsworth's,—and I suspect that Keats would have beaten us both. He beat me, certainly, in pure, abstract poetry, such as that of the old poets. I guess that the French critic is a man of the name of P., who wrote the article referred to in the *London Magazine*. He is a good-natured man, and a dandy, who puts Lord B. where he is because he is a lord, and Wordsworth because he has cleverness enough to be taught his merits. But I suspect, as you do, that if he were to give way to his real feelings, he would exalt me to as starry an eminence as anybody: which is what I do not think a greater critic would do. . . . .—Your ever affectionate friend,

Leigh Hunt.

Albaro, 16th August, 1823.

DEAREST BEBS,—You are a good girl, and I love you very much. But you need not take so much pains another time to prove the integrity of your correspondence. I am sure you do your epistolary duty, and I will do my best to deserve it. I am glad to hear you are at Richmond, because the trees will soothe you in spite of *themselves*, and because there will be such an agreeable interchange with the dissipations of your theatre. Dissipate as much as you can, every way, and only think of your friend as one who still hopes to be the climax of your comforts, and who would delight to think you had every enjoyment on earth, even though he had the bestowal of none of them;—which is much for one who wishes you to have them so heartily. Never imagine that these things are spoken out of the mere wish to console, but in a spirit of infinite tenderness also, and a wish to partake of the consolation. I never think of a pleasure for any length of time together, but duty and inclination alike make me desire that you should have it above all other absentees; nor can they partake of the same wish to console them, but I should seem guilty of an unusual sort of infidelity if I did not recur perpetually to your first claims and my own gravest sympathies. I am not even satisfied till I make them sensible of this, and that, next to my own family, I look to your companionship and well-being as alike your own greatest good and mine. This to satisfy my own heart, and do justice to the generosity of yours, which must continue to be generous and so beloved; for it is there where I am most touched at last. It is this which gave me such an enthusiastic affection for S.

You are now aware of all my infinite wishes to console. Your flowers, your books, your track of thinking and of sympathizing (especially now that you have clasped adversity with such patient generosity, and turned her into your friend) are all alike to my taste, and necessary to *my* consolation,—always excepting you could be *more* happy somewhere else, and then I would still be comforted in the idea that

you were at last really happy. . . . .—Your affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Florence, 17th September, 1823.

. . . . I delight to hear about your book, and about Coleridge. Bless his old studious, and, at the same time, jolly chaps! I think he is in earnest, because all solitary scholars love trees and flowers, and he walks about Highgate with a book in his hand. . . . .

While Leigh Hunt was in Italy, he was not forgotten by friends at home. A choice circle, who remembered a particular Twelfth-night at his own house, assembled at the house of his friend Vincent Novello, on his birthday.

FROM MARY SABILLA NOVELLO.

Shacklewell Green, 19th October, 1823.

DEAR, DEAR LEIGH HUNT,—Now, while the atmosphere of pleasure and music is circulating nimbly around, let me endeavour to give you some idea of the commemoration that has taken place this day. It is just two minutes after one, and you are snug in bed, unless thoughts of England and the friends there celebrating your birth should keep you waking. Ah! you may be assured your idea has not been from them this day. We have had Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams, the Gliddons, with George, &c., last come from you, C. C. C., E. Holmes, H. Robertson, Mr. Nyren, C. Evans, Francesco Novello, Vincenzo, and Wilful Woman. Miss Kent, unfortunately, was not in town. Our meeting was fixed a fortnight since, and early this morning I was busily employed cutting fresh boughs and flowers to mix with my artificial ones, to decorate our parlour. You do not know our new parlour, but the P. F. stands in a recess by the fireside (not near the window), and on it stands our Venus and two vases, the

latter full of flowers; chimney-piece, decorated in like manner, opposite to which the dear Mercury, looking so pleasantly down upon our happiness. At Shacklewell there are two parlours, on each side of the street-door; these open with folding-doors into each other; the back one, looking into our pretty garden, is the one I have described where the P. F. stands. In the one adjoining we have the piping farm and vases, which latter being filled with green boughs and roses, make an arbour for the youthful gracefulness, where he looks "piping as tho' he would never grow old." I look up and see him at this moment; he reminds me of you and of past happy hours, and seems to desire to be affectionately remembered. Our room is decked, I know, to your taste, and worthy of him who taught us to enjoy the pleasures within our reach; for though I always loved flowers, yet I was not easily pleased but with the finest, until you taught me the value of green boughs. We had bay in honour of our poet, laurustinus, Cuba japonica, &c. Our friends were with us at one in the day, excepting those who were at Smith Street, and who joined us between five and six. Then our day fairly began; your name ran through the room like a charm, and your spirit seemed to animate them all, as though they could not better manifest their devotion, an universal spirit of enjoyment broke loose; puns, good and bad—badinage, raillery, compliments; but, above all, music was triumphant. We began with some of the most delightful motetts—Mozart, Haydn, Handel, Beethoven; then the March in *Alceste*, with a part of the same arranged to Latin words by Vincenzo, and which he hopes shortly to forward to Italy. Then came Figaro, "Cosi-fan Tutte;" Don Giovanni, "La Clemenza," finishing with "Connoscete," until nearly midnight. You may imagine the merry supper that succeeded, further aided by a dozen of champagne (British), which C. C. and E. H. sent in to assist the gaiety and to drink your health worthily. Your health *was* drunk *con amore;* and by this time, being pretty well elated with so many excitements, they sang round the table "Beviamo," "How sweet is the Pleasure," and

many other musical merriments; in short, they were in "excellent fooling," and declared unanimously that such an evening had never been spent before. Indeed, it only rates second to the Twelfth-night, and much reminded us of that meeting; yet so closely allied, as you well know, are pleasures and pain, that several times, and particularly during the singing of "Ah, Perdona," many tears were shed by friendly eyes. Our cordial visitors are now journeying homewards. My cavaliers are all gone to bed, and I am delightfully employed, endeavouring to give you an idea of our pleasure. I wish you could get this to-morrow morning; but at such a distance, as Mr. Lamb says in his letter to Baron Field, the spirit and unction of the thing quite evaporates. I was haunted so constantly with your image during the evening, that I was almost tempted to believe in the theory, that what we earnestly and intently desire becomes realized. Is there any chance of seeing you corporally among us again? Mrs. Shelley playfully tells us we do not love you, or we should go to you. . . . .

To Arthur Gliddon.

Albaro, 24th July, 1823.

Mr. Gliddon,—Sir,—I have to inform you, sir, by desire of a person of distinction, to wit, myself, that I have no sort of pity for your troubles; and that it is an insolent pretension in you, sir, *not* to pretend anything in adversity, but go about, as you always do on such occasions, exhibiting unaffected manners, and behaving kindly and good-humouredly to everybody. Of what use, sir, let me ask, will authors and books be of, and treatises of philosophy, if persons, troubled both in fortune and the hip-joint, and fairly worn thin with sufferance, are to conduct themselves in this abominable manner, without one help even from Seneca or Plato?

Dear Mr. Arthur,—I long to see you, and have some more of your grave jokes. Do you remember quarrelling with your "love" in the Hampstead fields, and tossing her

the penknife she gave you out of your waistcoat pocket? Do you remember Mrs. Quickly, and how she would have no brawlers? I remember everything, so pray remember us poor exiles. I wish you would write me a letter full of all the gossip you can think of. Mrs. Shelley will tell you what a charity it is at this distance; and since I have been away I have become the most prodigious tattler (in inclination) upon other people's affairs (in England) that you can imagine. Miss Whatshername, that used to make so much of that recurrent old gentleman in Tavistock Street, and he perpetually going to the play, does not beat me. Tell me not only about all my friends, but your own, for I shall know them all by instinct. If you can't write a whole letter, Mrs. Gliddon must help you. What of Mrs. John Gliddon? (to whom, and his wife, and such of the children as recollect me, pray remember me kindly.) What of Mr. Thomas Gliddon, and Alicia Gliddon, and Mrs. Gliddon, senior, and all the Gliddons, you Gliddon? Let me know, since you know, and "then we shall *all* know, you know." How is Mr. Whatshisname, who once kept a school at Hampstead, and afterwards lent me a book? And Mr. Morphett, how is he? Does the Raines "set in" as he used to do? How is the parrot? Tell me all the bad things you can about "Wilful Woman," for I know she'll tell me none herself, nor anybody else, nor you neither. Novello also—I expect all the news of him, which he does not give me himself; and, by the way, don't spare your wife. —Dear Gliddon, believe me, very seriously and sincerely, yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

You must wear a ring which I send you.

To ALISTATIA GLIDDON.

Albaro, 25th July, 1823.

PEACH-FACE,—I have no more good paper, so I write to you upon bad, which you will not mind, because you are full of good-nature, and because you'd be as glad to see me in a

corduroy jacket as a blue coat, if it "wasn't my misfortune."—What are you doing? Whom do you see? Where do you go? And how do you do? Let me know all; and tell me particularly of your health and Mr. Gliddon's, though Miss Kent is kind enough to write me often upon that head. Do you sit up all night with sick children as you used to do, and do other intolerable things? Ain't you glad to see the *Indicator* at your tea-table again? The thought of it refreshes him even now, after his writing; so he sends you a little piece more of him, in the shape of a ring, which he hopes, with the permission of the other on your finger, you will wear at a becoming distance from it. You see how modest absence renders me: but you know I had always the knack of making impudence and modesty kiss and be friends; so there is a Christmas-corner salute for you—and so, good-night. I hope you and Mary Novello get out in the fields again, now you are delivered from that Covent Garden tie of yours amidst the smoke and noise. Pray think as badly of all as you can now, and of everything connected with it, except your old friends. If you are not so well off in some things as before, or rather in some prospects, you must be better off in everything else, health particularly; and what is there in the world like health and affection? I only wish you would give Mr. Gliddon half as much of the one as you do of the other, and he would be as merry as he deserves to be, and as he helps to make others. God bless you. Talking of these things makes me grave; but gravity cannot help being at the bottom of all our best feelings, whether they look grave or not in the face; and whenever it has to do with an affectionate feeling, even in times of the greatest sorrow, cannot but bring a certain pleasure with it. God bless you.—Your affectionate friend,

L. H.

We have already seen allusions to books written by Miss Kent upon a branch of science which she systematically studied. Her chief botanical works were *The*

Flora Domestica and the *Sylvan Sketches*. They comprised a very clever account of the plants usually found in English scenery, or most conveniently cultivated in English gardens, or even in the little garden which the town-prisoned man can cultivate outside his window. The scientific descriptions were enlivened by a good store of quotations from the poets and classic writers. In these works—even in the midst of moving at a distance—Leigh Hunt took an active share, contributing largely towards the classic and literary materials. Specimens of this correspondence are given amongst the other letters, for indeed it materially helps to illustrate the writer's character.

To Elizabeth Kent.

Florence, March, 1824.

Dearest Bebs,—Thank you for your nice long letter, for its gossip, its kindness, its sense of duty, its *hope*. You will come, rest assured ; and it is not the worst thing in the world to be *so* occupied meanwhile, especially as it is all for one another's sakes. . . . .

When you speak of your new work, I hope you mean the one on trees, for I can help you a great deal with it. I have already got some curious memorandums, but not having been able at the time to put them together, I did not send them, thinking you were to get ready your bookiness as fast as possible by way of appendix. Pray tell me that this is not true and that I may go on collecting my memorandums. I will send them you from time to time. The present letter brings you the translations for your new edition, besides one or two others which I think you will like. Try and get the poems of Madame Deshoulières. I think they would please and suit you very much. There is a cheap stereotype edition which I would send you if I had a carrier. I hope by this time you have seen the first number of the *Wishing Cap*

It will appear every week as regularly as clock-work. All my present energy goes to the manufacture of *Wishing Caps*, and to the endeavour to raise the sale of the *Examiner* all I can. So publish everywhere that I am an infinite writer, infinitely regular. My brother has a lump of them in advance, and I manufacture daily—not one of them at a *time*, but the manufacture is always going on. The articles in my brother's hands are the Introduction, three articles on different quarters of the metropolis (pray mark the beginning of the one on the city, which is the last), an article "On a pigeon making love" (very proper and philosophical); another entitled "Rainy-day Poetry," and two called "A Novel Party," in which I introduce a company consisting of the heroes and heroines of celebrated novels. You must know, modestly speaking, that I think all these articles good, and that I never wrote better prose in my life—I mean good in point of style. Among those which will come in a week or two is a prose translation of Gresset's *Vert-Vert*, which I think will amuse you very much. So now, to have done with my vanities. The Museum! and not know it! Why, you goose! I read there for two whole years, on and off, and it was there I began to pick up Italian. So I should have been with you in your studies, notwithstanding your description—for which, nevertheless, I thank you. Particulars and personal gossip are everything in letters from abroad. There are capital public libraries here, and I have free admittance; but then, you know, we live, for health's sake, a little out of town. However, I make little driblet additions to my books, as you will see, and am growing a very surprising Frenchman, as well as Italian. It shall all turn to *Wishing Caps*. Never was enthusiastic hatter more resolute to do everything for his "line of business." . . .

Florence, 27*th May*, 1824.

DEAREST BEBS,—Positively I will never again be led into delay by the dislike of writing a short letter, and the hope of being able to send a longer. Mind, I call all the gods to

witness—and moreover make you a promise in the manner the most binding upon me of any (you know what that is). So now for a short letter till Wednesday next, being the *2nd of June*, when I mean to chat with you by appointment; for nothing shall hinder me on that day, visited or unvisited.

I send off my 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th articles on the 1st of June; and the batch following, for the 1st of July, will contain a criticism on the *Flora*. I hope it will appear about the time of the second edition. Here are the translations you wished. Martial's inscriptions on plates and dishes (for it is among these that two of your quotations are found) are, to say the truth, very dull things in general, at least to an English apprehension. I have endeavoured to give them a turn, not unfaithful to the original, and perhaps presenting us with some of the spirit which the Romans may have found in them.

Poma sumus Cybeles, &c.

ON PINE NUTS.

"High and mighty fruit are we,
Apples of great Cybele.
Speed thee, Trav'ller; or thy crown
Brings the pelting ruin down."

The word apple (*pomum*) was applied by the Latins to the fruit of all sorts of trees. In English fir-cones are still called fir-apples.

Barbara de pictis, &c.

ON A BASKET.

"From Britain's painted sons I came,
And *Basket* is my barbarous name.
Yet now, so modish am I grown,
That Rome would claim me for her own."

This is a curious instance of the antiquity of the word *basket*, which may fairly be derived from Bascanda.

Displicent nexæ.

"Ribands from the linden tree
Give a wreath no charms for me."

This is Horace speaking. He is telling his servants not to make ostentatious preparations for the wine he is going to drink under a bower, nor to add anything to the simple crown of myrtle for his head. Philyra is generally translated the bark of the linden tree; but it means the delicate skin underneath the bark, from which the ancients made ribands for their garlands.

Ebrius incinctus philyra, &c.

"A cup too much the boon companion takes,
And reeling in the dance, his linden riband shakes."

Until you told me the other day, I never gathered from your letters that you were at all advanced in your tree book, much less that you had nearly done it. So, partly from illness in the first instance, and partly from occupation with *Wishing Caps* afterwards, I have only got the following memorandums. I send them to you rather to show you I had been thinking about the work, than from any hope of their being useful.

PREFACE.—Vitality of trees.—The leaves, their lungs, &c. Many have thought they have sensation.—The Arabians, in their imagination, even gave them a language.—Trees once furnished altogether the habitations, meat and drink, and clothes of some nations—still supply us with medicine, furniture, houses, food, ships, and instruments of numberless sorts. —Furnished wood for the statues of gods formerly, as they do even now for those of saints in the south—were dedicated to gods—rendered the co-existing abodes of wood-nymphs.—The insides of our cathedrals are supposed to have been suggested by those noble twilight walks which are found by stately groves. I do not attempt to enter into all the thoughts which are suggested to poet and philosopher by groves and woods; but it is curious how often the greatest and best things of nature are apt to be forgotten or carelessly passed by among

civilized nations for want of a hint to their imaginations, or something (I am really afraid I must use the term) like a fashionable memorandum; and as children and rustics in old time have found out healing water and sacred treasures, &c., so a book of the present humble nature would fain be the instance, if it could, of pointing out some of the greatest sources of pleasure in this wood-abounding country. Besides fruit and furniture, and other utilities, great and small, it may be said that trees help to supply us with poetry and reflection. They rejoice us when we are glad; and whisper calmness to our sorrows. It has been said by a great authority that "man does not live by bread alone." It may also be said that man does not live in houses alone; he lives in fresh air, in exercise, in the healthy dominions of nature. A walk under the trees is like music for soothing the spirits, &c.

AUTHORS TO QUOTE.—Davidson's *Virgil;* Smart's *Horace; Natural History,* with designs, I think, by Daniel (Mr. Hunter had it); Cowley's *Plants;* W. Browne; Linnæus's *Tour in Lapland;* Smith's *Travels in Italy* (but these are chiefly for flowers); White's *Selbourne* (which contains some admirable things about trees and their inhabitants); Keats's *Hyperion;* Shelley; Wordsworth; Coleridge; Milton; Creech's *Theocritus;* Spenser; Chaucer; Evelyn's *Silva,* &c.; *Decameron.*

Acacia.—There are large woods of it in the Theban territory, the country of Pindar and Epaminondas. When the French were lately masters of Italy, they planted walks of trees in many of the cities, and made a garden even in Venice. Among others, they adorned the walls of Florence with an inner wall of trees, among which the acacia predominates.

Aloe is supposed by some to be an Arabian word; by others a Greek, derived from the word signifying the sea, which they love to grow near. Aloes abound in the mountainous part of the Italian coast.

"Its arms the everlasting aloe threw."
See *Gertrude of Wyoming.*

Almond (Amygdalus) is said to be so called from the scarified appearance of the integument, and of the green bark. In

the story of Phyllis and Demophoon, it is prettily said Phyllis lamenting his absence, which she thought voluntary, was changed into an almond tree without leaves, and that on his returning and embracing it in a passion of tenderness, the happy tree burst into foliage.

Arbutus (Greek *Comaros*), so called from its keeping its *coma*, or "head of hair," in winter time, for the rest fall off.

Buffon's curious link of trees with animals.

Passienus Crispus, a very clever man, according to Seneca, fell in love with a tree, and used to kiss it, and lie at its foot and bathe it with wine. . . .—Ever your most affectionate friend.

PARAPHRASED FROM THE GREEK OF MELEAGER.

"A flowery crown will I compose,
I'll weave the crocus, weave the rose;
I'll weave narcissus, newly wet,
The hyacinth and violet;
And myrtle shall supply me green,
And lilies laugh in light between:
That the rich tendrils of my beauty's hair
May burst into their crowning flowers, and light the painted air."

This delicious little Greek poem is one of those which I always seem to scent the very odour of, as if I held a bunch of flowers to my face. Perhaps, by-the-by, you can make something of this remark.

Send me always as many verses to translate as you can. They give me no sort of trouble.

Add this to your article (if you can). Poppies.—A friend informs me that there is a pretty fiction in one of the Latin poems of Mr. Landor, in which Ceres is supposed to have given rise to the poppy to assuage her anguish during the search for her daughter. My friend would have translated it for this work, but he obeys an injunction in the poem, by which the eulogizers of the poppy are warned how they eulogize it too much. Indeed, the most merited praises of this "balm of the gods" cannot be accompanied with too great cautions against the abuse of it.

Florence, 2nd June, 1824.

Well, Bebs, I am this day uninterrupted, and mean to remain so; I ought to say *we*, for my wishing-cap was on long ago, and if you do not know and feel that I am with you this moment, why—you are not the person I took you for. But you do; that is certain. It is astonishing what a quantity of things are done at the same time. To gross eyes for instance, you would now appear to be writing, and sitting in London, hearing the wind or rain (for I presume there's nothing else yet), and wondering perhaps what your absent friend was writing at the same moment: whereas, though indeed you are doing all this to said gross apprehension, and I am doing just the same here in Italy, yet we know very well at the same time that we are really in one another's presence, asking and receiving how-d'ye-do's, besides affectionate embraces manifold. As for your bad weather (of which I have read great deluging accounts in the newspapers), we have the same here, or at any rate the shadow of it, to the great marvelling of the Tuscans. May—which was all rain with you—has been almost all clouds with us; and the Neapolitans, to their consternation, have had snow in April. May came in with a delicious burst of fine weather, just as if to show us what she could do, and then "kerchieft" herself in "comely clouds." She showed us her divine face again the other day, when I wrote last, and now again is coy and will not be seen. Indeed, it is now June; and yet June—yea, even Tuscan June, is as cloudy as if he had just come from England. There is a great shower coming towards me *over Boccaccio's* house at this moment, preceded by a Wind who is by no means a gentleman-usher, but very boisterous. Mark, however, notwithstanding all this, I am writing with my casement wide open, and fires have been long unknown among us. We scorn fires. I know not what the lemon and orange trees in the garden say to the weather; but they look very odd in it. I cannot help thinking that their sunny balls are grown paler. The tufted olives, too, seem yearning this way and that, and bristling with cold. One longs to take

them in one's arms, and warm them. Meantime, however, the country is in most luxurious condition, and promises a superabundant summer. The corn is as high as my chin, as I walk through it. The poppies and other wild-flowers are in excessive condition: and the vines and fig-trees all robust and insolent. You will see by an article in the M. C. entitled the *Valley of Ladies*, that I have been modest enough to become more reconciled to the beauties of Tuscany. To say the truth, the neighbourhood became more leafy and English than I had looked for. At the foot of our hill, there is even a meadow,—a meadow of real grass, with the hay newly cut, and a clump of trees on one side, that reminded me of the beautiful meadows near to Shepherd's Field at Hampstead. You may guess how I longed for your company. Dear Mar. has got such a habit of staying in-doors, and is grown so sorry for having done it so long, that I neither know how to scold her for not coming out, nor to bear the want of her society even as I did. But I hope—I hope—I hope: and we must all hope, and help one another.

I have spoken of Boccaccio's house. It is the one where his company pass the first part of their time in the *Decameron*. I see the castellated top of it over the trees. Beyond is the valley of the Arno, and beyond that the Apennines. I hope to send you, before long, a sketch of the scene from my window, by means of a portable *camera obscura*, of which I am promised the loan. This is the first day, you must know, that I have taken possession of the room with *the* window in it:—no, yesterday was the first, but to-day is the first day I have put up my little bookshelves in it, and sat conscious of my goods about me. Furthermore, madam, this present writing is my first under these circumstances. It is on a storey by itself, midway between the upper and lower rooms, and very quiet. I could not inhabit it in winter, because our rogue of a landlord did not send in his stoves till too late, and when they came, they smoked. So it is the first time I have had real quiet since I have been here, and I enjoy it much. There is only one window; but it is a good

one, looking out as aforesaid. It is not large, though of decent English size. The whole prospect till you come to the Apennines, is nothing but vines and olive, mixed with a few other fruit-trees, and white villas. Pray next time you write, give me an exact account of your own room, and tell me, moreover, when you rise and go to bed, and all that you do meantime. Also, do *you* name a day or two in your turn for me to spend with you, as I named the 2nd of May and June, and tell me all I am to do. But I hope it is not to be distant, for again I say, "*When*, WHEN, WHEN do you come?" Mrs. W. tells me that she shall be here in autumn, at least; this she seems to reckon upon, if she does not come before. I have exhorted her to fortify herself with a companion, as you will see. Certainly, unless you could come sooner, nothing could be better. She knows the countries, the ways of travelling, etc., and two women on a journey amount to one man. Let me know about your health. Mine, just now, is considerably better. If it were to continue so, I should do very well, and be able to write comfortably.

Signor Gianetti (of whom you may have read in a note to the article on Pisa in the *Liberal*) has come to Florence to study the law, and is in the habit of being with me every morning at six to interchange languages: so you see that a Tuscan I mean to be. To complete the account of my room, and set you an example, I will give you even a list of the books in my little shelves, as they are not too numerous to fill up the pages. The large bookcase is up-stairs in the dining-room. *Imprimis*, then, on the upper shelf (and under Mr. Havell's drawing of Angelica and Medoro) W. Browne's works, the *Gentle Shepherd*, *Tales of the Genii*, *Don Quixote*, *Arabian Nights*, *Gil Blas*, *Fairy Tales*, and the two last volumes of the *Parnaso Italiano*; the remainder of which fill up the two other shelves:—so I have soon despatched them. The two volumes of Clement Marot lie one on the *Don Quixote*, and the other on the *Gil Blas*. Then the shelves on my right contain—Upper Shelf—Boileau, *Fables de la Fontaine*, Sir W. Temple's *Essays*, Johnson's *Ana*,

Œuvres Diverses de la Fontaine (his Miscellaneous Poems). Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius—*Rime del Ariosto*—the little *Virgil* you gave me; Martial, Juvenal, Ovid's *Fasti* and *Tristia*, Claudian, Statius, Lucan, Sallust, the Works of the Chev. de Boufflers, the Works of Mad. and Mdlle. Deshoulières, and Anacreon lying over the middle.—Second Shelf: *Flora Domestica*, an Italian dictionary of mythology in two volumes, the *History of Fiction*, Ovid, Theocritus, Plato's *Republic*, Diogenes, Laërtius' *Lives of the Philosophers* (these two works belonged to dear S.), Homer, Virgil.—Third Shelf: My old *Spenser*, ditto *Milton*, ditto *Shakspeare*. On the table where I am writing lie some English Poets, a volume of *D'Herbelot*, Baldelli's *Life of Boccaccio*, and Spence's *Anecdotes*. On the table behind me, *Beaumont and Fletcher*, Florio's old Dictionary, and my Greek Lexicon; and on the stove, which is like a pedestal, are two shells, my Greek patera, and the Greek Mythology. Over the shelves at my right is Mr. Keats's portrait; and over the table a small looking-glass, surmounted by Mr. Havell's other picture out of the *Penseroso*. If I can manage it and be very profligate, I mean to put a plaster bust over the stove; but strange to say, such things are dear in Florence; I suppose, because there is such a heap of original things for students to copy. My catalogue has taken more room than I thought for; but you will pardon it for the sake of the spirit with which it is sent. Pray tell me if you hear anything good said of my *Wishing Caps*; for my brother after his usual cold-seeming fashion, says nothing; though, indeed, he was moved, in his own person, to call the first packet I sent him "excellent." Think of that. Mille *bacj*, *bacissimi*, from your ever affectionate friend.

I could not help feeling emotion at the news of Lord B.'s death, strange as his conduct was. Poor fellow! he was the most spoilt of men; and I do believe was naturally good.

Florence, July, 1824.

DEAREST BEBS,—I have "weighed all these things" in my mind, as you requested, and weighed them for a fortnight. With regard to calumny, it certainly exists in Florence, as well as elsewhere, particularly as the small number of the English gives them, in this respect, somewhat of the appetites and venomous concentration of a village. But I live very much away from them, and in the country; and to tell you the truth, this is not the chief thing that has made me ponder and pause in this matter. I believe that one part of the public will always, if they can, calumniate any man who tries to amend them, and whom therefore they conclude to be their superior; but the great part, perhaps these included, will nevertheless be always willing to read one, and let one profit by them, provided they are amused by one's writings. There are, undoubtedly, other considerations connected with calumny, and such as I am not insensible to; but believing that everything might end well for my family, provided I could exert my full powers of writing and entertainment, I am apt to think the rest of minor account; and in short, you, who are on the spot, very likely know more of these matters than I do; for except that a stray Englishman now and then tells me of what is gossiped of other people's affairs in Florence or Rome, I read and hear nothing either of theirs or my own. It is impossible therefore, at all events, for me to pronounce in this respect.

But what you tell me of the "fancies" to which you still have a tendency, make me, I confess, think very seriously. If the doubt of the affection which I have for you has been the one thing which always disturbed your temper and peace, the constant disturbances to which your temper was liable were certainly, as far as yourself were concerned, the one thing which harassed mine; I will not enter further into past matters of that description. I am sure you are very sorry for them, and I am equally sorry that you suffered so much in consequence, and that I was induced by the irritability of your temper to fancy doubtless, myself, many

occasions for remonstrating with you upon it, that might have been spared. Had I been wiser, I believe I might have done away many of the other occasions; but we are apt to grow wise too late, and I am obliged to comfort myself with thinking that nobody more cordially *wished* you to be more happy than I did, my affection, as I have told you a thousand times, being greater for you than for any other human being, next to my wife and family; though doubtless it would have been somewhat added to, as I have told you also, had not the temper you derived from your constitution secretly led you to doubt whether I had so much, and then given occasion to make me render the doubt stronger. We have all faults that require mutual indulgence; and your error consisted in picturing to yourself an affection as if this fault of temper did not exist, and then being angry that it was not entirely of that *amount*. You must read all this in the very kindest tone, for so it is spoken. If I am graver than usual in any part of my letter, it is from finding that I do not appear to have the same chance as I thought I had of seeing us all comfortably situated here together.

It is not, however, incompatible with the greater affection, (indeed it is quite the contrary) to say that I desire your comfort and tranquillity, and those of dear Mar., above any other consideration; and it is behaving like the very best, and best tempered affection, on your part to desire the same for me. I thank you very much for the candour of what you have stated, and must deserve the same cordial though painful thanks from you, by telling you, that as you still think yourself liable to those fancies, and hold yourself bound in kindness to forewarn me, so, I on my part, in consequence of the progress of years, and the perpetual demands made by intellectual labour on my constitution, am certainly not a whit stronger, if so strong, to meet them without exhibiting anything angry. I should be so vexed at their appearance, especially after the patient and tranquil manner in which you have borne yourself so long, that I should infallibly be most agitated; and a series of these agitations would have the

worst possible effect both on myself and your sister. At present we are tranquil, and by means of keeping primitive hours, and indeed living in a primitive manner in every respect, contrive to get through all our duties, though they sometimes half kill myself, and oftener your sister. But unless, dearest Bebs, you brought to us as total a power of suppressing yourself in the fault more immediately your own, as we both find ourselves under the necessity of suppressing those that belong to us,—why, I will say nothing—for I am weak still to pronounce an opinion which I am loth to present to my own mind; but at all events, this matter must be further discussed, before I could say that we ought, any of us, to hazard our present tranquillity, and our future hopes of family good and comfort, by a pressure upon feelings, of which our situation would not afford the disturbance. I will touch upon one or two points by way of illustration. You say you still think you are right about my "objection to eager defences." I daresay you are: but your mistake lies in overlooking the sort of thing defended. I used to be suspicious, for instance, when you made an eager defence about temper; but I should never have been suspicious, had you made an eager defence about an action of charity, or the account of a matter of fact. On the other hand, if Mrs. —— were to make an eager defence about her temper or sincerity, I should have some objections to it; but not if she made as eager a one upon her want of stinginess, or her power to write a romance, and so on with others. You might have expected me, with the progress of years, to have become very patient in everything. Impatience is not so much a part of my temperament, as yours, and I am undoubtedly bound to be more so than you are; but though I can go on very well, and with more general patience than ever, if enabled to cultivate my tranquillity, I certainly feel myself liable to more particular agitations. A fit of agitation could only be avoided or overcome in me by the most painful exercise of patience. I should be days before I recovered it, perhaps; and what would become of my writing mean-

while? Think of this, and let it diminish as much of my dignity in your eyes, as it may, so that it enables you to judge me rightly.

Your sister still throws up blood in a most distressing manner, almost daily: and one of the surest causes of its appearance is mental agitation of any sort. The weather has been singularly against her here, owing to the surprising inclemency of the season; winter and spring excessively cold, and now summer either violently hot or fierce with storms; but if I could only secure to her a decent length of tranquillity, the singularity of her constitution is such that everything might be hoped from it. As to the *non needle*, it might easily have been managed, and would, undoubtedly, have been best, though she seemed to think you unsocial in not saying anything about her. Meanwhile, at all events, cultivate society and your books as much as possible, and believe me ever the same affectionate friend,

L. H.

P.S.—I have forgotten Tom and his glorification. We fear by your not writing again, that they have not gone on so swimmingly. It is easy to suppose that Tom will turn out a good actor, though I should have thought he would have been best in comedy; but a great tragic actor, I confess I cannot so easily fancy him. Actors, however, are strange fowl, and there is no knowing. Your account of him set us all in the skies.

P.P.S.—Your sister has read this letter since I wrote it; I could not but try to persuade myself that the danger was more on the side of the tattlers than of temper; but you are both wise and kind to be so candid, and show more affection for me than if you had not been. Write immediately on the subject, and let us talk further. Is there no way? no means of indulging all hearts, and keeping out all heart-burning?

Write again, and take in the meantime *mille baci*.

Florence, 1st September, 1824.

DEAREST BEBS,—I have received your letter, and was startled to find how long it had been since I had written; but when you hear that I have been writing a long set of prayers and meditations for the use of those who are not of the Established Religious Opinion, which I felt it my duty to do, and which has half killed me, I shall be forgiven. Add to this, that we have no longer any female servant, so that I help to nurse the child, and that my brother's refusal to insert the *Wishing Caps* every week, has put me upon the necessity of accepting employment elsewhere, in order to add to my annuity of 100*l.* a year, and you will, I am sure, put the kindest and least melancholy construction upon everything I have said and shall say, if it be only to make the burden of all our common anxieties as little as possible. I could have given a great deal to be able to answer your letter on the spot. These long posts are frightful things, when the feelings are concerned. But patience, patience. This is my old lesson, and I am obliged to practise it still. You are very much in the wrong, if you suppose that anything is in the way of your journey, as far as concerns Marianne. She was disconcerted indeed at your taking no notice of her in your letter, except by what seemed to imply a horror of having anything to do with her needle-work. Needle-work is a thing for which she herself has much less respect than formerly, though she is still forced to attend to it. But she is quite persuaded, as well as myself, that you could have been of pleasanter service to us than in that manner. I dwell the more upon this, because you evidently misconstrue the feelings under which she alluded to your non-mention of her. You did not mention her at all, that is certain, nor allude to her, unless the mention of the needle-work included an allusion; and you should not put the hardest construction upon a sense of omission, which might arise from a modification of the very kindest nature, and I am *quite certain* did so. Your sister would be extremely glad of a female companion. Stronger as our union has grown

every day, she has nevertheless learned in this anxious solitude to agree with me, and to know the value of those additional props which, under certain trying circumstances of life, bring further support and affection about us, without weakening the old ones. The very nature of a trying affection,—urging, because it has to struggle with worldly troubles,—requires this, and loves to *divide* anxiety. So much has the want of society affected myself since we have been here, that I am certain it has helped to undermine my bodily strength. The stiffness of age has come into my joints: my legs are sore and fevered; and I sometimes feel as if I were a ship rotting in a stagnant harbour. When we received your first letter, I confess it startled us both; for our whole hope and salvation is in tranquillity, and the retaining strength enough to work, which we already do with difficulty,—she with her bleeding chest, and I with my beating temples. Writing still reduces me sometimes to a frightful state of nervousnes, and the very least fright and surprise brings up the blood out of her mouth, sometimes by a cupfull. *Think of that*, and of what necessity to her it is to be tranquil. But I think both of us might still live many years, and in comfort, if comfort will come. A tranquil companion, prepared to make the best of everything, and to consider self-comfort as only the result and reward of a refusal to make it a consideration at all paramount with the comfort of the many (I mean our own many, all of us included, but included *as* all), would be a piece of heaven come down upon us. But the fancies you spoke of, and which you seemed to announce to us, reminded us of those past circumstances under which you did so much injustice to your most generous qualities, and which I never should have alluded to, if you had not alluded to them yourself. You spoke of these; you spoke of them also as a part, though not the chief part, of the objection that might be found against your coming; furthermore, you bade me well think of it; and finally, you bade me not conceal any thought to which they gave rise; adding that ——but I will quote the whole passage. I will only premise beforehand, that the doubt which you thus plainly expressed

as to whether the thought of a journey to Italy gave you more pain or pleasure, added to the comforts which I thought you enjoying, and the accounts repeatedly sent us from various quarters of your comparative health and good looks, made me the less anxious in being candid; for I have long learnt to consider myself almost as absolutely nothing in any scheme's success, however hard this solitude endeavours to make me think otherwise. If I could only secure bread for my children after my death, and think your sister would be happy, and picture yourself to my imagination at least tranquil for the rest of your days, (for the interest I take in all your welfares is intense), I feel often as I could retire to a lone corner, and die at once, out of gratitude. Whatever comfort or tranquillity I look for, I can at all events never partake, unless I think you *all* partake it, *whether absent or present*. So, for God's sake, put the kindest and least melancholy construction upon all I say or do. (My head reels as if it were drunk, for I have a bad head-ache.) The following is the quotation:— "I have had hard lessons, and have no fear that temper would ever overcome me as it has done; but I know the tendency I have to feel *every appearance* of slight or unkindness, *however trivial*, and *even to fancy them* in those I dearly love; and however I hope it may not be so, or believe it will not be so, I cannot pretend to affirm that I shall never exhibit such fancies. Now, my dearest friend, weigh *all* these things in your mind, above all, the question of consequences to yourself from the talking world; and either say to me that, in honest truth, and from the bottom of your heart, you feel convinced that no ill consequences will result to you from my visit, or tell me candidly that I had better not join you at present. Believe me I can well bear it; for ardently as I long to behold you again, so great is my dread of injuring you (and so much have I suffered from that thought when you have had little suspicion that I did so), that *I really do not know whether pain or pleasure predominates when I anticipate a journey to Italy*. I entreat you, my dearest friend, be candid and plain with me, as I have been with you, and do not in mistaken friendship,

act the part of an enemy. You cannot conceive what a horror I have of this:—it is worse to me, far worse, than absence itself."

You see this is very strong and full of injunction. It is true, you appear to think a comparative nothing of the probability or possibility of the tempers in question*; but by the great effect which the mention of them had upon me, you may judge of what I think of the comparative nothing of the calumnies. I allow, that the latter may be formidable; but by far the most formidable thing of all would be the loss of strength and spirit to myself, and inability to write. I should certainly be liable to get more angry with you for the exhibition of them, than ever I was, after all the experience you have had, and the nice behaviour you have shown in the midst of others: and the idea of this, loving you as I do, and excessively anxious as I am for your exercise of the good qualities natural to you, and for your reputation and noble standing with others, makes me think that I would rather forego any society, however dear to me, than hazard the least chance of it, and so render us all less tranquil than we are. I must tell you that the comparatively slight way in which you talked of this point alarmed me a good deal more, perhaps, than it ought to have done, considering what you say of it in your last; but in *all* my feeling on this subject, you may see of what infinitely superior importance I hold it to all other considerations. A family of love may be a heaven in itself, and defy the world. It may retain all the cheerfulness to say the most entertaining things, and all the spirit to do the best and kindest for society; but when I think any more of the smallest discord, and other sad contradictions to good and comfort, a thousand reflections pour upon me, that force me to go through any other pain and wretchedness, rather than hazard an evil so overwhelming. Mind, I say this with reference to your former letter. If you thought these tempers of such comparatively trivial importance, it is hard if you could not forego them once for all, seeing what an effect the apprehension of the least of them has upon me. But this, as well as the effect

of the talking world, is for you to determine upon, not me. At least, I cannot take the whole of such a determination upon myself, especially as I cannot possibly know anything of what may, at present, be or be not said against me; otherwise, to tell you the truth, I *would* know it. I am not afraid of encountering any face of evils, short of that which should deprive us all of present strength and future hope; and I think it a mistake in reasoning on your part, not to have set aside your consideration for me in this respect, in order to be able to know how to consult with me upon it in a greater. Observe. I put it down to no other account than a mistake in reasoning; for I know how many things are construed in less noble senses, that ought to be put down to that account in all of us; and I feel persuaded, on the same account, that had you earlier known the *mistakes* you committed in matters of temper, as a mere business of greater or less reasoning, *all* the pain you underwent might have been spared you, as far as I and your sister could have done it away. It is inconceivable how much may be done by the mere absence of this infirmity, and how much rendered impossible by the reverse. But the fault was not yours, certainly not the greater part of it, and originally. I lament bitterly everything I may have done to exasperate it,—anything which need not have been done, or might have been done otherwise; though I will not, for your sake or my own, suffer this regret to disturb me so as to hinder whatever tranquillity or strength I can obtain for all our sakes. But I remember well how you were brought up, and what ill extremes and examples, on such matters, were resorted to and set before you, examples which tended to give you no affection or respect for those who complained of you so violently. But *all* must be forgiven in this world, especially when we think how they themselves have been modified by education and circumstances. You tell me not to give you any hope at all, rather than subject you again to heart-sickening disappointment. The injunction is a very awful one to me; but as I regard you as linked with all the interests and hopes of my life, I cannot cease so to

regard you, unless I thought you could be perfectly tranquil without some reflection on your own part; in which case, whatever pain I might suffer myself, I would tell you at once to give up all hopes of coming to Italy, unless a total change took place in my family condition. I would tell you so now purely to render you more self-possessed and energetic, if I thought it would do so. But there are dilemmas, as you must know, in many cases, that are equal on all sides; and we are all in one at present. Why do you not make a confidant—I will not say in this matter—of your friend Miss Rose, for I believe she was always of a different opinion with you on those points, or of your new friend *Mrs. Williams, who expresses a great regard for you, and might help us all to an opinion?* Write to me at all events, very speedily, and very tranquilly and nobly, that I may see what you can do under such a dilemma in your best manner, and this will be a guide to myself such as will be of service *either* way. Be sincere with me yourself, at the same time, in your turn; and tell me if it be in your *power* to hope nothing. We are all weak, more or less, and in a thousand things are we all ignorant. Therefore must we all help one another, and make no single one responsible for any measure necessary for the many, if it be inevitable. Your anxious and ever affectionate friend.

Do not be uneasy about my affairs. I have had a fourth offer from Colburn to write for the *New Monthly Magazine*, which by the way looks well for my present standing with the public, whatever the *W. Caps* may say; and I hope I shall receive considerable additional profit from it. *Go to Novello directly, and he will show you a long statement which Mr. Brown has had the kindness to draw up about my affairs; by which you will see the whole state of them.* By the way, Mr. B. knows nothing of the question pending between you and me, and never speaks of you but with respect and regard. I believe I told you he was a great admirer of your book. He likes indeed *both* your books, and is himself writing a long fairy-tale. You must know after all, that I think your

little book beats your large one. "Lily and Giddy" are "familiar in our mouths as household words." The children growing up are prepared to like the writer exceedingly, and I can tell you, would be very much astonished if they beheld any temper in her unworthy of her volume.

You only need ask the Novellos, or others, simply, whether they think your coming here would be injurious.

Do not forget to be quick with Novello, on both points, or he will send off the packet on the accounts to my brother; to be sure, he will have it again. But still go.

7th September.

BESSY MINE,—Since writing the enclosed, though it is only two days ago, I have quite changed my mind as to one great matter. This may seem very quick; but it is no less true. I nevertheless send it you, because it enters into one or two things, very necessary for you to know, and because the letter itself has helped to produce the very change in my opinion; for after all which you have heard me say on the subject of temper, and seen me prepared to suffer, as well as after your own answer to my former letter, I cannot but come to a very strong conclusion that you would never again think of disturbing your dearest friends with that infirmity. I never supposed that you could do so in the former manner, but I mean in any manner. It is indeed a childishness, which we are bound to sacrifice to a great and solid sense of the importance of happiness, say, at least, of peace or patience,—whether we are in prosperity or adversity; and on this point, I at length feel quite convinced. Your intellect, your sufferings, your candour in supposing the possibility of it, and your shock in finding that the mere apprehension of such a thing gave me so much distress (which will have rooted out the last tendency in your mind to regard it as a thing allowable in minds of a certain quality and information,) have all united to convince me. The only thing now remaining is the "talking world," and on this point I confess my own feelings are not so great as those of others, especially as I am about

to quit (at least for the present) all politics and newspapers; for the calumny was no doubt a party business. But undoubtedly I agree with yourself, that we are bound to consider it; nor do I hesitate to say, that as I can make up my mind to count my own comfort and pleasure as nothing in comparison of the many whose interests are in my keeping (God knows how truly it is so), I am compelled, at the end of all my anxious and earnest meditations on the subject, to come to a conclusion that I must treat even a friend's comfort in the same manner, if the hard necessity of a choice is forced upon me. Of the calumnies themselves, whether they still exist, I no longer know anything, but plenty of persons must know in England. Consult some of these. It is a vile task, but one of duty. Consult the Novellos, for instance, or Mr. Clark, or all, or such as you think would at once be kindest and frankest, and let them determine for us. If they are favourable, come; if not,—seek all sorts of society, and comfort, for *both* our sakes, for we must still be prepared to do one another all the good possible, however it may be required of us.

L. H.

Your sister laughs, and bids me tell you, that if you come *now*, she shall certainly put you upon helping her to get through her needlework,—a good hard bout of it too, but one and no more. But she is only joking, she says. We have got two new subjects for books for you, which ought to get you another 50*l.* apiece; one on *Wild Flowers*, the other on *Female Dress*, which I will explain in my next.

Florence, 4th January, 1825.

DEAREST BEBS,—. . . . This is the first letter I have written this year; so pray take it as a compliment, and with it the compliments of the season.

I shall be able to answer your question respecting the books in about a week. Mr. B. has requested me to wait till then, because he thinks of sending for all the books he has left in

England; in which case yours could come in the same box without any expense. It is much to wait, for books, books, books! Ah, you know not the many weary days I pass, when I can get no fresh ones. You seem in a comparative state of Elysium to me, residing at a bookseller's, even with all your new troubles; just, I suppose, as I seem to you, residing in solitude among olive trees. What a pity that people cannot interchange the good things they possess in this world! but I conceive all is for the best end. Nature (if it is she that settles everything, not leaving ourselves to do it), would not be guilty of so sorry a jest as to get up so perplexing a masquerade. I hope, as you say nothing about them in your last, that your frightful troubles in-doors are at an end, or at least have got a truce; though you never shone more in my eyes than while they lasted. I trust I did not construe your limitation ill, when I made your sister a partaker of the secret. It had the best effect upon her towards you. But tell me if I did; for you know I like to take everything connected with confidence as literally as possible; and neither wish to tell, nor to have any secrets told me by anybody in the world, if entrusted to their keeping. We shall send you a box, I hope, shortly, ourselves. Pray tell me of any little thing you can think of, which *you* should like to be put in it. The children are all to send you something apiece, and Marianne.

You made us laugh heartily with the story of the beef.* You must know I have a great horror about hearing about Miss M., for she once wrote me a letter in which she called me a delightful poet, and no less delightful *proser*; which I did not know whether to take for a panegyric, or a satire; so I never answered the letter, which was horribly unpolite; and

* The story is one that afterwards got into print, and it is very simple. Mr. Macready went down to visit Miss Mitford at her country residence. Some friends were with her, partaking of her luncheon; and when Mr. Macready's name was announced, she earnestly exclaimed,—"Oh! take away the beef, for here is that elegant creature."

I have ever since, when I hear her name mentioned, not known whether to feel remorse or satisfaction. I conclude, upon the whole, the former; so if ever you fall in the way of her or her friend, pray state the case as it really was. She will have some opinion of my modesty, at any rate, if that is a quality which she values "in an elegant creature;" for of course I am elegant too, as she does not know me. But did this beef story come from her "friend?" If so, such friends are suspicious. I remember her speaking of Mrs. H. in her letter, and calling her "my poor friend, Mrs. H." This, of course, you will not tell: for you are a real friend, and a good secret-keeper, and a peacemaker, and (except when you talk of exiles forgetting their dearest friends) have no fault to be found with you by your ever affectionate,

L. H.

P.S.—You do right to keep below during these high winds. People in general never think a house can be blown in upon their heads, till they are convinced by the catastrophe; which is an excess there is no necessity of going to on such occasions, purely from a habit of being safe on others.

We never hear of such a thing as fires in Tuscany.

I have no fancy for sending the tragedy a second time. It is bad, and not altered, and I have not time to alter it. You know I took it out of the manager's hands before, because a conviction of its unfitness came over me. I have no dramatic faculty.

You have got the *Martial* by this time; and I hope by this time have seen "Harry Honeycomb's Family Journal" in the *New Monthly*.

Florence, 26th February, 1825.

DEAREST BEDS,—If the box has not come away, pray send me *all* the *volumes* of *Dolby's Universal History* hitherto published. They are in boards, and are 6*s*. 6*d*. apiece. I have long been in the greatest want of some history, not possessing a single one, but had no hope of being able to buy one.

I would thank you at the same time to procure any good thick volume of *Chronology*, ancient and modern, or modern by itself (though not ancient), provided it be not dear. Will Tegg's do? Furthermore, there is a man of the name of Pinnock, who publishes profane catechisms of art, science, &c. Has he a *metaphysical* catechism? and a *logical* catechism? If so, let me have them both—I believe they are sixpence each. If you could scrape together some cheap *Comedies* (except the *Suspicious Husband*, *Bold Stroke for a Wife*, and *Beaux's Stratagems*, which I have), you would oblige me by them,—particularly Wycherley's, Congreve's, and Farquhar's. *Poach at bookstalls for me, and let me know from time to time what you find.* Oh, how the book advertisements torment me! It seems as if I should get well and happy, could I subscribe at Colburn's, and have a fresh book to read every day. However, I must be content with being somewhat better, and less unhappy. Should I be going too far in my book expenses to ask you to put in the box Miss Mitford's work, *Our Village?* The title takes me, and what I hear of it. I long, long, long—oh, how I long to read about an English village again, English meadows, and English woods. The little book you sent the children, with pictures—*Rural Scenes*—I have despotically taken to myself, and keep it locked up, that it may not get torn. This is hardly a letter, but I am late with the *Review*, and if I do not write to-day, I shall not be able to send till Tuesday. God bless you, prays ever your affectionate friend,

L. H.

Florence, 16th April, 1825.

Bess mine,— . . . . (I have this minute heard the cuckoo for the first time.) We have not had any rain for these three weeks, and the weather is as fine as your June. But nothing can make up to me for the want of proper *treey* trees and grass walks. I am often seized with a desire to walk through particular spots in England, generally a path in a field. Sometimes I long for the Hendon road; some-

times for that pretty entrance to Hampstead from Kentish Town; often for the Hampstead lanes and the slopes of West End; and often and often for Petersham, though I never was there. We are determined to come to England at all events, when we can afford it, in order to have our old companionship of books. Besides, we have resolved to send all the children, one after the other, to the celebrated school near Birmingham, which you have heard of. John is going, I hope, this summer. This will take money, but I will work—work—work—oh, how I will work! and how I trust I shall be able to work, with my new prospect of making a little more money. If I were on the spot, among the reviews and magazines, I think I could do a great deal. . . . .—Your ever affectionate friend,

L. H.

FROM MARY SHELLEY.

Paris, 18th August [1823?].

MY DEAR HUNT,—I have just returned from spending three days at Versailles. I went to dine and sleep one night, and the Kennys being there, and my dining at their house, made me remain a day longer than I intended. H. S. was very polite, as was also Mrs. S., who in truth is in very delicate health; besides Eliza and Horace, they have only one child, a little girl, two and a half years old, all life and spirits and chattering. Eliza is at home; she seems a nice girl enough, and H. S. seems happy in his domestic circle, pleased with France, which Mrs. S. is not, so they will return to England—God knows when. I was pleased to see the Kennys, especially Kenny, since he is much, dear Hunt, in your circle, and I asked him, accordingly, a number of questions. They have an immense family, and a little house quite full—and in the midst of a horde of uninteresting beings, one graceful and amiable creature, Louisa Holcroft, the eldest of Holcroft's girls by Mrs. Kenny, she is now, I suppose, about two and twenty; she attends to the whole family, and her gentleness

and sweetness seems the spirit to set all right. I like to see her and Kenny together, they appear so affectionately attached. You would like to see them, too; very pretty, with bright eyes and animated but unaffected and simple manners, her blushes cover her cheeks whenever she speaks, or whenever mamma is going to tell an unlucky story, which she has vainly endeavoured to interrupt with, "Oh, mamma, not *that*." Kenny has just brought out an extremely successful opera at the Haymarket. It was to have been played at Drury Lane, but "Constantia gone! Amazement!" (I made them laugh by telling them this) refused to act if he did not have Elliston's part, which would not be conceded to him. Poor Kenny is in spirits at the success of his piece, and is not half so nervous as he was, neither apparently or really, as Louisa tells me. I have a sort of instinctive liking for these *authors*, and, besides, was glad to talk of something with a person of observation after having exhausted my nothings with Mrs. ——: so Louisa, Kenny, and I, drew together in a corner, and talked first of the Godwins, and then of the Lambs. I will reverse this order in writing of them to you.

Two years ago, the Lambs made an excursion to France. When at Amiens, poor Miss L. was taken ill in her usual way, and Lamb was in despair. He met, however, with some acquaintances, who got Miss L. into proper hands, and L. came on to Versailles, and stayed with the Kenny's, going on very well, if the French wine had not been too good for him: so I found him no favourite with the S.'s. Poor Miss L. is again ill just now. They have been moving, renouncing town and country, to take one which was neither or either—at Islington, I think, they said. Kenny was loud in her praise, saying that he thought her a faultless creature—possessing every virtue under heaven. He was annoyed to find L. more reserved and shut up than usual, avoiding his old friends, and not so cordial or amiable as his wont. I asked him about Hazlitt. This love-sick youth, jilted by Infelice, has taken to falling in love. He told Kenny that, whereas, formerly,

he thought women silly, unamusing toys, and people with whose society he delighted to dispense, he was now only happy where they were, and given up to the admiration of their interesting foibles and amiable weaknesses. He is the humble servant of all mrriageable young ladies. Oh, Polly! Wordsworth was in town not long ago, publishing, and looking old. Coleridge is well, having been ill. I heard little else—except that the reign of Cant in England is growing wider and stronger each day. *John Bull* (the newspaper) attacked the licenser of the theatres for allowing a piece to pass with improper expressions; so the next farce was sent back to the theatre with a note from the licenser to say that in the farce there were nine *damns*, and two equivocal words which, considering what *John Bull* said, he could not permit to pass. *John Bull* is conducted by Hooke, a man I know nothing of, but whom H. S. and Kenny joined in abusing as the publisher and speaker of greater blasphemies, indecencies, &c. than any person in the world. My utter surprise is, why they have not pounced upon *Valperga*. . . . .—Believe me, faithfully yours,

MARY W. SHELLEY.

2nd October.

. . . . You must know that Southey has attacked *Elia's* religion in the *Quarterly*, and whined over the fate of T. L. H. (*my favourite child*) for not having better religious principles instilled into him. This roused Lamb, and, on the spur of the moment, he has written a reply, which has appeared in the *London Magazine*. With regard to religion, he turns the tables on Southey, and tells him that no one can tell what religion he is of; tells him that any spirit of joking that he (Lamb) may have on that subject, he imbibed from Southey himself; telling him that he had all his life made a jest of the devil; saying, "You have made wonderfully free with, and been mightily pleasant upon, the popular idea and attributes of him. A noble lord, your brother visionary,

has scarcely taken greater liberties with the material keys and mere Catholic notion of St. Peter. You have flattered him in prose; you have chanted him in goodly odes; you have been his jester, volunteer laureat, and self-elected court poet of Beelzebub." What, after this, will become of the satanic school? Southey has spoken ill of L.'s friends: he calls them over, mentioning their various good qualities briefly, and then more fully enters upon your character and his intimacy with Hazlitt. He says:—"Accident introduced me to the acquaintance of Mr. L. H., and the experience of his many friendly qualities confirmed a friendship between us. You, who have been misrepresented yourself, I should hope, have not lent an idle ear to the calumnies which have been spread abroad concerning this gentleman. I was admitted to his household for several years, and do most solemnly aver that I believe him to be in his domestic relations as correct as any man." He then alludes to *Rimini*, disapproving of the subject, but saying, "that it has nothing in common with the black horrors sung by Ford and Massinger," and says that he looks upon the author of *Rimini* "as a man of taste and a poet. He is better than so: he is one of the most cordial-minded men I ever knew—a matchless fireside companion. I mean not to affront or wound your feelings when I say that, in his more genial moods, he has often reminded me of you. There is the same air of mild dogmatism—the same condescending to boyish sportiveness in both your conversations. His handwriting is so much the same with your own that I have opened more than one letter of his, hoping, nay, not doubting, but that it was from you, and have been disappointed (he will bear with me for saying so) at the discovery of my error." He alludes to your opinions concerning marriage, which he says are opposite to his own; but he says neither for these opinions, "nor for his political asperities and petulances, which are wearing out with the heats and vanities of youth, did I select him for a friend; but for qualities which fitted him for that relation. I do not

know whether I flatter myself with being the occasion, but, certain it is, that, touched with some misgivings for sundry harsh things which he had written aforetime against our friend C., before he left this country, he sought a reconciliation with that gentleman (himself being his own introducer), and found it. L. H. is now in Italy; on his departure to which land, with much regret, I took my leave of him and his little family—seven of them, sir, with their mother—as kind a set of little people (T. H. and all), as affectionate children, as ever blessed a parent. Had you seen them, sir, I think you would not have looked upon them as so many little Jonases, but rather as pledges of the vessel's safety that was to bear such a freight of love. I wish you would read Mr. H.'s lines to that same T. H., 'Six years old during a sickness:' 'Sleep breathes at last from out thee, my little patient boy' (they are to be found in the 47th page of *Foliage*)—and ask yourself how far they are out of the spirit of Christianity. I have a letter from Italy, received but the other day, into which L. H. has put as much heart, and as many friendly yearnings after old associates, and native country, as, I think, paper can well hold. It would do you no hurt to give that the perusal also."

He then turns to Hazlitt; but it is too long to quote. He regrets his instability; but speaks of him with infinite kindness.

I copy all this, dear Hunt, because I am sure it will give you pleasure to find how your friends in England remember you. And you are comfortless, I fear, there, where I would fain be, in dear Florence. I *do* dislike this place; yet here I am, with little hope of being quickly elsewhere. I was glad to find that you had found an old acquaintance at Florence, and shall be happy to see her (could you entrust her with my watch? but do not write to me by her, or by any one, except the post. I have a particular dislike to letters by a private hand, if they have anything in them worth

reading). What a divine place Italy is! It seems to mature all gentle feelings, and to warm with peculiar sensibility an affectionate heart; its winds whisper a thousand expressions of kindness—clouds vanish from the mind as from the sky. Here! methinks a cold rain falls upon the feelings, and quenches the living spark that was lighted there—it is a dreary, rainy, cold, *infelicissimo paese*. When! oh, when, shall I escape! I walked the other day with William to the fields about Kentish Town, old friends, I doubt not, of yours. The day was fine. Those fields are particularly beautiful, shaded by majestic elms, and looking towards the woody uplands of Highgate. Next summer, I shall get out to some place like this, and enjoy the best part of England, its fields and trees. Yet, I love the mountains of Tuscany, its olive copses and chesnut woods, its dancing streams and vine-shaded alleys, and its transcendent sky, better than the green grass here. So you were disappointed with the Venus de' Medici; so was I. She is an artful little thing; so unpretending that you almost think her insignificant, but she creeps upon you, she and all her excellences, until you are quite taken with her grace and softness. You go to the gallery—that is well; you see some society—that also is well. You did not see the scenery of Valperga; but all Tuscany bears the character of that scenery; though the country around Florence, perhaps, less than any; it is too much inhabited, too little solitary. (N.B.—No further notice has been taken of *Valperga* in the *E*——. Another N.B.—Did you send the copy of that book to Mrs. Mason; if you did not, or have one to spare, will you send it across the Apennines to the Guiccioli at Bologna, as I promised her one, and she writes to remind me of the promise. I have asked her also to get a book or two for me, which she will send you. You will pay her, and forward me the books by the first opportunity. Do you know that the duty on my *foreign* books comes to 14*l.*—the whole packages will cost me 20*l.*; so beware of purchases to bring home with you). Adieu, dear Hunt, my own Polly,

and do you, Polly, write; for I learn more of the real state of things in three lines from you than three pages from Hunt. God bless you all, dear grandchildren. You see I have a large sheet of paper, and will fill it soon; and again declare myself, what I now do *en attendant*, your affectionate exile,

[M. W. S.]

THE RETURN HOME.—HIGHGATE.

CALLS to England accumulated as 1825 advanced. One very peremptory call arose out of a very unhappy dispute with John Hunt, the elder brother, respecting the proprietary rights of Leigh Hunt in the *Examiner*, which he was construed to have forfeited. This was afterwards submitted to arbitration, with an award in Leigh Hunt's favour; and his brother, influenced unquestionably by third parties, continued estranged from him for some years, until they were called together again by the sheer prompting of natural affection, to find that the grounds of quarrel had been the result of misconstruction on both sides. Prospects of more advantageous employment were also held out in England, and friends were clamorous for the return of the voyagers.

"We had hoped," writes Mr. Novello, "to have sojourned with you at least a fortnight this summer; but it will not be. Everything was planned, arranged, and fixed, the 22nd of this month even named as the starting day; but it was suddenly dashed to nothing, and has left me at least disappointed and discontented; in short, my friend, expect us not in Italy, but come to us at Shacklewell."

Leigh Hunt and his family were already making their preparations in the summer.

Florence, 16th June, 1825.

My dear Novello,—This is excellent!—I shall, then, see you all shortly! I shall drink tea in the garden! I shall hear Clarke's grinding and Holmes's yearning! I shall have dear Wilful shaking her head, but not her heart at me, and giving infinite little laughs! Sultana the saucy will come, with "dear Mr. Arthur!" and, as Mary says, there will be no stopping the Babel but with music. In fine, I shall have *mud*. No disrespect to my friends, but you cannot imagine the reverent idea I entertain of a good large weltering road full of right English mud, savage and slush. I require it to take the hot dusty taste of Italy out of my mouth, as the Irish chieftain used to roll himself in a quagmire, to get rid of the fever of his wine. I rattle away, but my delight is deep, dear Novello, and my gratitude as much so. Colburn has done all, and more than I expected; and I am glad of the polite and cordial manner in which he behaved. . . . . I shall set him down as the most *engaging* of publishers. What I mean to do for him is infinite, but I cannot yet speak with regard to theatricals, till I ascertain whether going to the theatre will injure my health. Pray make my compliments to him, expressing my proper sense of his readiness to accommodate me; and say I shall be anxious to make my appearance in Burlington Street. . . . .

They did not begin the homeward journey, however, until the 10th of September.

To Elizabeth Kent.

Ville Franche, 22nd September, 1825.
Four posts on your side of Lyons.

Dearest Bebs,—You would not have forgiven me, had I written to you from Chambéry. This has an odd sound; but if I had, I should not have been able to write you the good account which I mean to write of Les Charmettes. But I must defer it, as well as that of the rest of my journey;

for I do not find myself so strong as I expected on this occasion. It whirls my head, and gives me colds and little fevers; so I am obliged to rest as much as I can. You must console yourself, madam, by the honour of having the full amount addressed to you. Dear little Henry has also been ill, and made us very anxious; and the change of living has affected Thornton and Mary. But Marianne says we shall all be better for the journey at last, which hope I accordingly entertain. She carries herself heroically, and I verily believe with profit, as much as the best of us. The longing I have to rest myself is infinite. I feel beforehand the carpeted floors and kind looks making me well. In little more than a fortnight I shall be with you. Will there be a letter at Paris?

I have brought you a slip of evergreen out of the garden of Madame de Warens.

Tell Tom I profanely bless the Author of my eyesight a dozen times a day. Through his means I had the pleasure [probably through the gift of a short-sighted glass] of discerning the remotest beauties of the Alps, and of being frightened with divers beautiful precipices in Savoy. The road over Mount Cenis we found as easy as one's hand. A heavy snow fell the day after we crossed it, which made Mar. exclaim, "A piece of good fortune at last." We looked with a scandalous satisfaction at the carriages we met going to Italy. God bless you. Do not take my fatigue for more than it is. I tell it you, because I would tell you everything.—For England! For England!—Your ever affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Auxerre, 3rd October, 1825.

BEBS MINE,—Your sister has been more jolted within the last day or two than during the whole of the journey. The Alps were nothing. It is the high roads of France that are the trial: neither is the road we have come interesting, to make amends. It wants wood, and even bushes. The neighbour-

hood hereabouts is pretty, with an elegant little tufted river, and some of "the vine-covered hills" that Mr. Roscoe speaks of. But the vines grow on straight little sticks, not many inches high. Savoy was the place for scenery. Chambéry is full of nests of deliciousness. The French are pleasant in their manner, but seem to contain a good deal of ready-made heat and touchiness, in case the little commerce of flattery and sweetness is not properly carried on. There are a great many pretty girls, but I see no fine-faced old people, which is not a good symptom. Nor do the looks of the former contain much depth, or sentiment, or firmness of purpose. They seem made like their toys, not to last, but to play with and break up. Fine faces in Italy are as abundant as cypresses.

God bless you. I must go and put this letter in the post, and see if I can fish up an old book on a stall. Auxerre is the native town of St. Palage, a man whom I love both for his books and his friendly heart. Let us hope such people would have liked us.—Ever your most affectionate friend,

L. H.

Amongst the friendly letters of this year I find one from Charles Lamb, which is worth printing for its own sake.

FROM CHARLES LAMB.

ILLUSTREZZIMO SIGNOR,—I have obeyed your mandate to a tittle. I accompany this with a volume. But what have you done with the first I sent you?—have you swapt it with some lazzaroni for macaroni? or pledged it with a gondolierer for a passage? Peradventuri the Cardinal Gonsalvi took a fancy to it:—his Eminence has done my Nearness an honour. 'Tis but a step to the Vatican. As you judge, my works do not enrich the workman, but I get vat I can for 'em. They keep dragging me on, a poor, worn mill-horse, in the eternal round of the damn'd magazine; but

'tis they are blind, not I. Colburn (where I recognise with delight the gay W. Honeycomb renovated) hath the ascendancy.

I was with the Novellos last week. They have a large, cheap house and garden, with a dainty library (magnificent) without books. But what will make you bless yourself (I am too old for wonder), something has touched the right organ in Vincentio at last. He attends a Wesleyan chapel on Kingsland Green. He at first tried to laugh it off—he only went for the singing; but the cloven foot—I retract—the Lamb's trotters—are at length apparent. Mary Isabella attributes it to a lightness induced by his headaches. But I think I see in it a less accidental influence. Mister Clark is at perfect staggers! the whole fabric of his infidelity is shaken. He has no one to join him in his horse-insults and indecent obstreperousnesses against Christianity, for Holmes (the bonny Holmes) is gone to Salisbury to be organist, and Isabella and the Clark make but a feeble quorum. The children have all nice, neat little clasped pray-books, and I have laid out 7*s.* 8*d.* in Watts's Hymns for Christmas presents for them. The eldest girl alone holds out; she has been at Boulogne, skirting upon the vast focus of atheism, and imported bad principles in patois French. But the strongholds are crumbling. N. appears as yet to have but a confused notion of the Atonement. It makes him giddy, he says, to think much about it. But such giddiness is spiritual sobriety.

Well, Byron is gone, and ——— is now the best poet in England. Fill up the gap to your fancy. Barry Cornwall has at last carried the pretty A. S. They are just in the treacle-moon. Hope it won't clog his wings—gaum we used to say at school.

Mary, my sister, has worn me out with eight weeks' cold and toothache, her average complement in the winter, and it will not go away. She is otherwise well, and reads novels all day long. She has had an exempt year, a good year, for which, forgetting the minor calamity, she and I are most thankful.

Alsager is in a flourishing house, with wife and children about him, in Mecklenburgh Square — almost too fine to visit.

Baron Field is come home from Sydney, but as yet I can hear no tidings of a pension. He is plump and friendly, his wife really a very superior woman. He resumes the bar.

I have got acquainted with Mr. Irving, the Scotch preacher, whose fame must have reached you. He is a humble disciple at the foot of Gamaliel S. T. C. Judge how his own sectarists must stare when I tell you he has dedicated a book to S. T. C., acknowledging to have learnt more of the nature of Faith, Christianity, and Christian Church, from him than from all the men he ever conversed with. He is a most amiable, sincere, modest man in a room, this Boanerges in the temple. Mrs. Montague told him the dedication would do him no good. "That shall be a reason for doing it," was his answer. Judge, now, whether this man be a quack.

Dear H., take this imperfect notelet for a letter; it looks so much the more like conversing on nearer terms. Love to all the Hunts, old friend Thornton, and all.—Yours ever,

C. Lamb.

After the return from Italy and a brief lodging in town, Leigh Hunt settled in a cottage on the top of Highgate Hill, close by his friends the Gliddons, near Coleridge, whom he often encountered in his walks, visited occasionally by Lamb and other friends, and not far from Mr. Mathews the actor. Here he writes to a friend: "Here is Mathews's gallery close at hand here, in Highgate;—all full of wits, actors, and actresses, calling out to be admired—Cibber taking a pinch of snuff, as though he stood at the top of Fopland; and Mrs. Bracegirdle, Congreve's mistress, with a waist like her name."

Some pains have been bestowed on collecting answers

to letters like the following specimens; but the replies are scattered, and cannot be recovered.

From Charles Lamb.

Dear H.,—I am here almost in the eleventh week of the longest illness my sister ever had, and no symptoms of amendment. Some had begun, but relapsed with a change of nurse. If she ever gets well, you will like my house, and I shall be happy to show you Enfield country.

As to my head, it is perfectly at your or any one's service; either Myers' or Hazlitt's, which last (done fifteen or twenty years since) White, of the Accountant's office, India House, has; he lives in Kentish Town: I forget where, but is to be found in Leadenhall daily. Take your choice. I should be proud to hang up as an alehouse sign even; or, rather, I care not about my head or anything, but how we are to get well again, for I am tired out.

God bless you and yours from the worst calamity.—Yours truly,

C. L.

Kindest remembrances to Mrs. Hunt. H's is in a queer dress. M's would be preferable *ad populum*.

From Thomas Campbell.

40, *Upper Seymour Street West*,
11*th August*, 1826.

Dear Hunt,—For this detestable passage in Hazlitt's paper I am, as I deserve to be, visited with much regret; but in as far as *you* are concerned, I have not the least consciousness of being to blame. There was, I must say, a culpable negligence in my not rejecting what relates to Mr. S., although I declare that, to the best of my remembrance, my offence was no more than oversight; for I could not have deliberately admitted anything so against him, so meanly impertinent, if I had been thinking of what I was suffering to go to press. I know not what I was thinking about, but I suppose I was

stupefied by the fatigue of looking over a long roll of articles. The oversight, nevertheless, I repeat, was blameable, and I am justly punished for it by finding myself made the cat's-paw of Hazlitt's calumny.

As to you, my dear Hunt, I am truly indignant at being made the means of annoying you; but I assure you, *upon my honour*, that the initial F. completely blinded me, and that I should not have guessed you the person *impertinented*, unless I had been told so at second-hand from yourself. If I can say or write anything that can make you a shadow of satisfaction, I am willing to do so; but I suppose you will despise this devil's aspersions, even though they have come from the quarter from which they ought least to have come. Resolving to profit by this painful experience, and to keep a better look-out in future, I am, dear Hunt, with great regard, yours truly,

T. CAMPBELL.

FROM MARY W. SHELLEY.

Bartholomew Place, Kentish Town,
30th October, 1826.

MY DEAR HUNT,—Am I guilty of any want of tact in addressing these few lines to you at the present moment? I trust not; or, if I am mistaken in my hope, yet I entreat you to set down my undelay to the account of over-zeal; and a wish, in part the birth of circumstances, to relieve your mind from a part of that care which I know is now oppressing it. I shall be too happy if you permit any act of mine to have that effect.

I told you, long ago, that our beloved lost Shelley intended, on rewriting his will, to have left you a legacy; I think the sum he mentioned was 2,000*l.* I trust that hereafter you will not refuse to consider me your debtor for this sum, merely because I shall be bound to pay you by the laws of honour instead of a legal obligation. You would, of course, have been better pleased to have received it immediately from dear

Shelley's bequest; but, as it is well known that he intended to make such an one, it is, in fact, the same thing, and so I hope by you to be considered. Besides, your kind heart will receive pleasure from the knowledge that you are bestowing on me the greatest pleasure I am capable of receiving.

This is no resolution of to-day's, but formed from the moment that I knew my situation to be such as it is. I did not mention it, because it seemed almost like an empty boast to talk and resolve on things so far off. But futurity approaches, and a feeling haunts me as if *this* futurity was not very distant. I have spoke vaguely on the subject to you before; but now, your having had a recent disappointment, I have thought it as well to explain in exact terms the meaning I attached to my expression.

I have as yet made no will, but if in the meantime I should chance to die, this paper may serve as a legal document to prove that I give and bequeath to you, dear Leigh Hunt, the sum of two thousand pounds sterling. But I hope we shall both live—I to accomplish our Shelley's intentions, you to honour me as far as to permit me to be the executor.

I have mentioned this subject to none, and do not intend: an act is not aided by words, especially an act *unfulfilled*; nor do I see that this letter requires an answer—at least, not till after the death of Sir Timothy Shelley—when, perhaps, this explanation would have come with a better grace; but I trust your kindness will put my writing now to a good motive.—I am, my dear Hunt, yours affectionately, and very obliged

MARY WOLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY.

To Leigh Hunt, Esq.

Highgate—Thursday.

[*Postmark*, 11*th August*, 1827.]

DEAR ANNIE AND JANIE,—How do you find yourselves? Sitting on a chair? For my part, I have found myself, for nearly this week past, with a great pain in my back, which is the reason why I have not called again in Queen Street.

I intended to come last Saturday for some tea and D. When will you come to us, and bring the D. with you? You are sure to find us at home. Swinburne is better, though still very ailing, poor fellow. Thornton, the renegade, has been at Ham all this while.—Your sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Highgate, 31st August, 1827.

DEAR ANNIE,—I hardly know why I put you to the expense of this letter, for I have little power to occupy or entertain you after my fatiguing daily work; and all the news I have, which is no manner of concern except to such good-natured friends as take an interest in anything your aunt will tell you. But I do not like to receive a letter from a lady and not answer it, especially from one who is also a good girl with a sincere face; so you see you must put up with your own praises, instead of anything more welcome. Victoria came that evening with her father and Mrs. C.; and she was very amiable, in a green gown and puffed sleeves; and Mr. H., I am sorry to tell you, did not say so much as he did the evening before; but then, to make amends, Mrs. C. talked to great advantage. Your letter pleased me much. Always write in that straightforward manner, and say just what you think, and never say what you don't, and you will be one of the queens of womankind; for truth is a sceptre before which every one bows. God bless you, dear Annie. Remember me kindly to Kate and Hatra, and tell them I hear and see them both on the stage very often, though I am not there: so they have an *Irish*, as well as an English audience.—Very truly yours,

L. H.

For some time after the return from Italy, the family had to undergo a frequent change of residence, leaving Highgate in 1828, and proceeding almost in each year to some fresh abode—at Epsom, at Old Brompton, St. John's Wood, and back to a house within three

doors of the old home in the New Road. One of the most successful works in this period, the *Recollections of Lord Byron*, had scarcely gone forth to the public, ere it drew upon the author comments hostile and injurious. And he was the more pained at this outburst of reproach, since, on reflection, he saw that the work had been dictated, in some degree, by feelings of temper on his own part. Amongst the affairs which most troubled him, and for the longest time, was the dispute about the *Examiner*, the origin and termination of which have already been mentioned. Other works, which were more congenial, were not very remunerative. The *Chat of the Week* was a small literary and artistic periodical, not without promise; but it was suppressed by the interference of the Stamp Office, which required the paper to be stamped, because it gave "news." It was succeeded in 1831 by the *Tatler*, which had brilliant but, unluckily, delusive promises of success. The reason for these repeated combinations of promises and failure has already, in some degree, been indicated. The writer brought to his work literary information, varied and concentrated in a very unusual degree, an animation also not common, and a personal sympathy which has very rarely been equalled. These qualities attracted a proportionate amount of admiration and personal liking, and the earlier evidences of success were correspondingly prompt and vivid. On the other hand, not only was he without any real knowledge of the business part of the transaction, but it is quite clear, on a retrospective view, that he could not impart to those who were associated with him the precise nature of the co-operation which it would be most useful for them to render. He assumed all such insight to be a part of ordinary business experience or business cleverness. The result was a want of harmony between

the real bent and character of the work as he designed it, and the arrangements which were necessary to carry it out. Moreover, the same deficiency in his own qualifications tended to prevent his feeling the importance of procuring assistance even in the literary departments, which would have added to the emphatic popularity of his own writing, elements, if not more acceptable, yet more generally required. To use a metaphor, he offered an entertainment which consisted all of high-flavoured and peculiar dishes, without the dishes which everybody looked for, and without which they considered no meal a meal. The *Tatler* was a publication partly on the plan of a newspaper, so far as literature and the arts were concerned, and partly also resembling the *Indicator*. It not only had every appearance of success, but it rallied round Leigh Hunt old friends, and procured him new friends. Amongst its earlier writers was Barry Cornwall, whose contributions were acknowledged in such letters as the one among those that follow. A great part of the *Sir Ralph Esher*, if I remember rightly, was planned and written at Epsom; but I see its publication set down in my table of dates for 1832.

Very early in this period, Leigh Hunt's difficulties were aggravated by family disputes, arising out of the conduct of other people; and the grief occasioned by this was embittered by the death of a favourite son—a son, of whom it may be said that he was the favourite of all who knew him, including those of the most opposite nature and in the most opposite positions. For instance, he was the favourite of his parents and of all his brothers and sisters, of his schoolmaster and schoolmistress, and, marvellous to relate, of his schoolfellows.

Partly the maturing effect of time, partly the training

in adversity's school, now called forth those qualities which have been mentioned as the most striking and most peculiar traits of Leigh Hunt's character. Amongst his female relatives, there was one for whom he had, at a boyish age, conceived a very high and a just esteem. The evidence of a deep respect for that lady's character appeared in letters written as early as 1805. At later periods of his life her opinion on family questions became of considerable importance. She was a woman who, to strong affections and a natural generosity, united keen insight and great firmness. Her actual training, though not inconsiderable for that period amongst her sex, was undoubtedly far different from Leigh Hunt's; and where they differed in opinion, there is some reason to assume that the right was on his side, though he marred it by taking too harsh a view of the harshness which she exhibited. On one important occasion, she not unnaturally thought it her duty, not only to make very strong representations of her views, but followed them up with a peremptory dictation, which he declined to obey. She then declared that she would take the matter into her own hands; and the correspondence assumed a bitterness which was afterwards deeply regretted on both sides. Some few years later, when he had returned to England, an accident which happened in the lady's own house, trifling in itself, and wholly unconnected with any previous question, unluckily directed upon her second daughter a displeasure as unfounded as it was bitter. On this occasion, Leigh Hunt interfered as a peacemaker. In that capacity he was welcomed by the lady's family. He wrote to her, and she responded with a force and eloquence which were natural to her; and while acquitting him, as she always did, from first to last, of any unworthy conduct

on his own part, yet she revived old grievances and forbade him her house. He declined to continue the correspondence in that tone, although still hoping that advantage might be taken of the Christmas season to do away with this unhappy family division. Shortly afterwards died his son Swinburne, and he then wrote to his mother-in-law thus:—

To Mr. and Mrs. Hunter.

Highgate, 25th September, 1827.

You know what took place on Saturday last with my poor little boy.

I think, if you could see his little gentle dead body, calm as an angel, and looking wise in his innocence beyond all the troubles of this earth, you would agree with me in concluding (especially as you have lost little darlings of your own) that there is nothing worth contesting here below, except who shall be kindest to one another.

There seems to be something in these moments, by which life recommences with the survivors:—I mean, we seem to be beginning, in a manner, the world again, with calmer, if with sadder thoughts: and wiping our eyes, and readjusting the burden on our backs, to set out anew on our roads, with a greater wish to help and console one another. Pray, let us be very much so, and prove it by drowning all disputes of the past in the affectionate tears of this moment. We cannot be sure that an angel is not now looking at us, and that we shall not bring a smile on his face, and a blessing upon our heads, by showing him an harmonious instead of a divided family. It is the only picture we can conceive of Heaven itself. He was always for settling disputes when he saw them. He showed this disposition to the last; and though in the errors and frailties common to us all, we may naturally dislike to be taught by one another, we can have no objection to be taught by an angelic little child.

For God's sake, let us say no more of these unhappy disputes, be the mistakes whose they may. I speak as one who am out of the pale of them, which enables me to be calmer than those who are in it: and if this will leave me without any merit in trying to put an end to them, compared with those who will agree to do so (as I am heartily sure it would), the honour which the others will do themselves will be only so much the greater. But what signify such words among friends and fellow-creatures? The question is, not who can have most honour, not even who has been most right, but who can agree that there shall be no more question at all. Nobody knows of this letter but Thornton and his mother. There has not been a hint of it; and I shall keep it a secret till the moment when I think you have received and considered it, at which moment I shall communicate the copy of it elsewhere; that nobody may be able to say they have been the first to agree to it. And so in the hope that it may turn to good (which is a hope, I confess, I strongly entertain), I remain your mourning but affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

P. S.—Shall we not all meet together very speedily at Ham, or Highgate, or St. Paul's Churchyard, and have one of the best, if not one of the merriest, of my old evenings? Allow me to say, without meaning offence to any one, that as the object of this letter is to end and not continue discussion, the readers will be good enough not to discuss anything past in their answer to it, nor take it amiss if I decline receiving any answer, in case they cannot oblige me with a happy one. The only additional thing I have to say, provided the latter comes (and it need only be verbal, if writing is troublesome), is, that while care be taken among ourselves that no allusion be made to past differences, unless to show our joy that they are over, so, among our other friends, nothing need be said but that the differences have been put an end to, and nobody remains in the wrong. And so, once more, God bless you! and keep us all in peace and charity.

When a trouble takes place, of any sort, the best way is to try and turn it into a good, and make greater peace than there was before. The question is not of merit or demerit, on which, perhaps, all the circumstances of life being considered, all persons are equal; but we can be more or less kind to one another.

This letter was effectual. Mrs. Hunter had been amongst the first and warmest in welcoming her son-in-law from Italy. Their characters had afterwards clashed; the sense of duty was engaged on both sides in the conflict; but unquestionably he was conciliated by the warm and unchanging affection which Mrs. Hunter had shown for other members of his family, and she was overcome by the unbounded generosity and charity of his nature. No woman better deserved stedfast affection than she did, and probably nowhere had he encountered a more genuine esteem and a more stedfast regard.

To B. W. Procter.

20*th May*, 1831.

My dear Procter,—I have been blaming myself every day, in the midst of a world of business, for not acknowledging the receipt of your letter, directed to the *Tatler* office,—and now your generous packet comes to make me blush. But I will trust to your humanity for my excuse. I have just glanced at your criticisms, but sufficiently to see that I shall enjoy them for their own sakes, as well as for the good they will infallibly do the paper: for they will be *money* to it, depend upon it:—I look upon them just as if you had put so much hard cash in my pocket; and I wish you particularly to feel this, and to apprehend with your delicacy all the reasons I may have for saying so. Furthermore, I had no remorse in receiving it, for I know it is what you *can* do; and so God

bless you! As to Pasta, I love her, for she makes the ground firm under my feet, and the sky blue over my head. *Magna est Pasta, et prævalebit.* And I'll swear you are quite right about Mrs. Siddons, much as I admired her. Mrs. S. was true after a certain fashion, but Pasta is truth itself. Your comparison of Lablache to the "furnace" strikes me so, that I must transfer it the first opportunity to one of my opera critiques. I must let you know, for my own sake, as well as, I hope, for your pleasure, that the dramatic extracts were much liked; but always bear in mind, that thankful as I am for your assistance, and desirous of getting it, you must absolutely not burst your fine head for me. I feel too much sympathy with heads, my own being eternally bruised. I am sorry to say that your name has accidentally transpired *among us;* but I have enjoined the strictest secrecy, and trust you may depend upon it. And so, once more, dear Procter, receive the hearty thanks of your obliged and affectionate friend,

L. H.

To Mrs. Procter.

5, *York Buildings*, 13*th March.*

My dear Mrs. Procter (for madam, somehow, is not the thing),—I am most pleased to be reminded of my promise, which I must have made if you say I did. I suppose I have been conning to keep it ever since; but it is a long way from sorrow to joy, and one is apt to get confused on the road. Do you know your letter brought the tears into my eyes? I hardly know why, unless it was that I saw Procter had been pouring his kind heart into yours, and you said:—"We must have him here instead of the coffee-house, and plant him by the fire, and warm him like a stray bird till he sings." But indeed a kind word affects me where many a hard thump does not. Nevertheless, you must not tell this, except to the very masculine or feminine; though if you do not take it as a compliment to yourself,—I mean the confession of my weakness,—why, you are not Procter's wife, nor Mrs. Montagu's

daughter, nor she who wrote the letter this morning to a poor battered author.—Very truly yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

P. S.—I eat any plain joint, of the plainer order, beef or mutton:—and you know I care for nothing at dinner, so that it does not hurt me. Friends' company is the thing.

"May you," wrote his old school-fellow, newly recalled to his acquaintance by a favourable critique, in the *Tatler*, of *Atherton: a Novel*—"may you tattle a thousand years." A more recent friend, who had still remained only a distant acquaintance, now challenged a personal intercourse, which ripened into the most affectionate friendship; and amongst those who were most faithful and most esteemed, there was none nearer to the heart of Leigh Hunt than Laman Blanchard. In a letter, dated August, 1831, sending a volume of poems, in a strain of modest self-bantering characterizing the man, Blanchard writes from the *Monthly Magazine* office:—

FROM LAMAN BLANCHARD.

Monthly Magazine Office, Johnson's Court, Fleet-street, 31st August, 1831.

DEAR SIR,— . . . I begged just now for one word—will you think me impertinent if I add another? That among many other pleasures arising from some conversations with Mr. Wordsworth when in town lately, I experienced a particular one in hearing him speak of you in a spirit the most kindly and grateful. No man has a greater *right* to speak so than he—but it is not always done; and I must confess that it did affect me much to hear from such lips an eulogism upon one to whom I am under infinite obligations for a long course of moral and literary tuition. For fancying that this and the rest that I have said can interest you, I shall hope for

your forgiveness; and I am sure you cannot be very angry when I assure you that no one wishes you more health and happiness than, dear sir, your faithful servant,

LAMAN BLANCHARD.

Dr. Bowring—since Sir John Bowring—as one of the leaders of the *Westminster Review*, called to offer assistance, in the shape of advertisements liberally and gratuitously to be bound up with the *Westminster Review*, the other two personages in the offer being Mr. Bentham and Colonel Thompson. "I would rather," wrote Sheridan Knowles, in a letter dated March 30, 1831, and beginning "My dear Sir,"—"I would rather partake of your bread and cheese, with a glass of Adam's ale, than of many another man's sirloin and port."

Another friend, who had an important and beneficial influence on Leigh Hunt's future, made his first appearance about this time. The author is acknowledging a gift from his new friend—a copy of the original numbers of Steele's *Tatler*.

To J. F.

Elm-tree Road, St. John's Wood,
20th June, 1831.

. . . . Thursday, as it happens, will suit me better than to-day; and I will do myself the pleasure of being with you.

I need not repeat to you how highly your gift is valued. I have been carrying it about the house with me, like a child who has had a picture-book given it; and have put it among some favourite books on a shelf, just before the table at which I write, that it may help to give me pleasant thoughts. I persuade myself that Steele may have had this identical copy in his hand, perhaps Pope, perhaps my Lady Suffolk. God knows how many of the wits and charmers of that time;

and the advertisements look as if Lintot and Tonson were still the booksellers. One feels as if one ought to go and buy the *New Atlantis* at Mr. Morphew's, near Stationers' Hall; or to look at the house that is to be let at "Moardon," in Surrey, belonging to "Sir Richard Garth." I observe, among a collection of poems "by the most eminent hands," some pieces I never before heard of, "by the author of the *Tale of a Tub*," which makes me think I ought to go and buy them, though the book is published by "Edmund Curll," which renders them of doubtful authenticity. In short, when one sees these things, does it not make one think that Steele and others ought to be eternally as alive among us personally as they are intellectually; and that, by some delightful and fantastic compromise with vicissitude, we should still have their wigs and their wit about us, with Reform and the French Revolution besides? in other words, all the old *good* things that ever were, together with all the good new ones!—Believe me most sincerely your obliged servant,

LEIGH HUNT.

It was in 1831 that some of Leigh Hunt's new and old friends projected the volume of collected poems, which was published, in octavo, by the new literary bookseller, Edward Moxon, of Dover-street, Piccadilly. The purpose of that publication was to supply the deficiencies in the writer's fortunes; and although, from reasons which are obvious in many things that have already been said, the project failed in securing all that was intended, it had the most welcome influence in many ways. By this time, perhaps, not a few of his friends had learned more distinctly to appreciate the exact causes of his embarrassments, though indeed the difficulty has been a very common attendant upon the literary class. "If pecuniary embarrassment be a crime," wrote William Kennedy, "then are the records of genius a Newgate calendar." A great number of

literary men, who had formerly been divided from Leigh Hunt by differences of political opinion, now came forward with the most genial spontaneity to show their fellowship in difficulty, and testify their esteem for his literary qualities. It will be remembered that Leigh Hunt had occupied no inconspicuous position; that he was no obscure claimant for attention, whose opinions were unknown or neutral; and the list of subscribers to his book constitutes in itself a remarkable tribute to his character. One of the most distinguished men in that list, Mr. Wordsworth, giving his name to the subscription, in a note, dated Rydal Mount, December 19th, 1831, said he was much concerned to learn that Mr. Leigh Hunt was suffering from ill health and embarrassed circumstances. He regretted that he could do little more than contribute his subscription, on account of his sequestered situation. "The consideration," he observed, "of Mr. Hunt being a man of genius and talents in distress, will, I trust, prevent your proposal being taken as a test of opinion, and that the benevolent purpose will be promoted by men of all parties."

Friends far and wide lent their help; persons previously unknown to the writer, in Ireland, in Scotland, in Wales, spontaneously came forth. A lasting friendship with Colonel David Lester Richardson began in this manner, while he was residing in the Madras Presidency. Another contributor shall speak for himself:—

Gray's Inn, Saturday, 21st June.

Sir,—I will with great pleasure give to the plan which you have communicated to me any little advantage which it may derive from my name. I wish to subscribe for one copy of the poems, and I heartily wish that it were in my power to

do more. I do not know Mr. Leigh Hunt by sight; I dissent from many of his opinions; but I admire his talents—I pity his misfortunes—and I cannot think without indignation of some part of the treatment which he has experienced.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your faithful servant,

T. B. Macaulay.

DOMESTIC TROUBLES.—LETTERS FROM CHELSEA.

In 1833, Leigh Hunt went to live at No. 4, Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea; where the family stayed until the summer of 1840. At the beginning of that time he wrote the *Year of Honeymoons*, in *Bull's Court Magazine*. In 1834 the *London Journal* came forth in a partnership with Charles Knight. The publication promised to have a brilliant success, but, as so often happened with the works of Leigh Hunt, the success was not sufficient to reimburse the labour or the cost. Two very conspicuous reasons for this constantly partial result are so obvious as to speak for themselves. Although attracting the personal affection as well as the admiration of those readers who took to him at all, Leigh Hunt still spoke with so much speciality of idea and expression, that the circle always proved to be comparatively limited. The intensity of the fervour with which his writing was received invariably gave an idea of a wider success than was ultimately realized. Again, the immense amount of labour which he bestowed particularly in searching out every point to elucidate and to verify, involved an outlay of time and of money that could scarcely be returned even by a large and certainly not by a limited sale. The expenditure in time, exertion, and health was thus constantly in excess of the returns. For by far the largest proportion of the labour, all that which simply negatived or

failed to elucidate, instead of verifying, remained unseen by the public, but was as conscientiously and arduously gone through as that similar portion which resulted in print.

In 1834, Leigh Hunt took the editing of the *Monthly Repository* on a sort of proprietary footing. In this he had some admirable assistance, amongst others from Walter Savage Landor, from Egerton Webbe, and from Richard Henry Horne. In 1839, Leigh Hunt published *Captain Sword and Captain Pen;* a poem designed to dissuade from war by exposing its horrors and vain results. In the following year he edited a collection of the plays of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. He had already been engaged in writing the *Legend of Florence,* an original play in blank verse, which was performed at Covent Garden in February 1840, with a very marked success.

It was unquestionably during this period of Leigh Hunt's life, however, that he experienced the greatest pressure of difficulty. His embarrassments had been increasing in 1832, while he was in the New Road; but bad as they were then, they became infinitely worse after he had moved to Chelsea. The friend who, of all others, had most actively worked to mitigate difficulties and to surmount them, finally had too frequent occasion to know in detail the troubles and perplexities that seemed almost daily to increase in the face of efforts to diminish them. More than once Leigh Hunt seemed to feel the necessity of explaining the causes of those difficulties. For instance, on the 1st of May, 1832, he writes to protect himself from the charge of want of feeling and impudent pertinacity.

. . . . You know how many children I have. They are constantly beside me, without my having the least hope

of leaving them a penny. All I pray for, is to be able to work for them till my last moment.

My state of health is so bad, that I do not tell my nearest connections how much I suffer from it. I have constantly a bad head, often a bad side, always a leg swollen and inflamed, in consequence (I am told) of the side, and often while I am entertaining others in company, such a flow of melancholy thoughts comes over me, that their laughter if they knew it would be changed to tears.

I never hear a knock at the door, except one or two which I know, but I think somebody is coming to take me away from my family. Last Friday, I was sitting down to dinner, having just finished a most agitating morning, when I was called away by a man who brought an execution into my house for forty shillings. It is under circumstances like these that I always write.

I have great *family* sufferings apart from considerations of fortune. One or two of my children, in temper and understanding unlike the rest, perplex me to a degree you have no conception of, and often make me ill and incompetent when other causes of trouble are giving me a respite.

And I have more troubles and great ones.

If you ask me how it is that I bear all this, I answer, that I love nature and books, and think well of the capabilities of human kind. I have known Shelley, I have known my mother. I know my own good intentions, which of course millions partake, and I have other friends who partake of Shelley's kindness, though they have not his means, and who console me for disappointments from others I thought such. And so, dear ——, pardon and think the best of me and my sorry letters, and come and advise me as soon as you can. Ever truly, your obliged and affectionate L. H.

About a fortnight afterwards, on the 10th of May, alarmed at an actual suspension in the supply of bread, he writes suggesting a mode of meeting the immediate difficulty.

You know my collection of Italian poetry, the Parnaso. I gave, many years ago, 30*l.* for it, at least—I am told several pounds more; and I understand its value has risen since. On the other hand, it does not look so fresh as it did then, and there is much of my handwriting in some of the volumes, which, however, might be no drawback upon it with one who liked the books for their own sake. For this collection, which at all events is complete, and contains a great body of poetry, including all the popular works, Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, &c. I ask half of the above sum—15*l.* Do you think you know of anybody who would buy it? or would you mind asking Moxon if *he* knows? The sum would take me out of this rabble of miseries, and enable me to work again as well as I am able."

Again, in December of the same year, he writes in allusion to a domestic calamity, which haunted him, and under which he suffered desperately for two months. He began to hope that he should receive a little more consideration.

So I *hope*. Oh! how valuable is hope! As to the rest, the case is this, and I let you fully see it, partly to excuse my having talked about it, partly in case the power of doing anything should arise sooner than might have been looked for. The circumstances above alluded to, those of the True Sun, the baulk I met with about Landor, another from Tait, and the necessity (deficient in impulse, and therefore tedious, perplexing, and I fear ending in having produced a poor thing) for writing so long a preface—have conspired to produce one of those *gaps* of extreme difficulty in which it is not to be wondered that a person in ill-health, with such cares as mine, is sometimes to be found. Of these, I have never distressed you with a complete notion, but they involve the most painful accessories of nervousness, inability sometimes to do anything for whole mornings but pace the room or go restlessly about the house, doubts whether I shall be able to have bread for

my family from day to day, necessity to borrow shillings to get a dinner or a tea with, constant dunnings at the door, withholdings of the family linen by the washerwoman, the sight of my children in rags (except the one that I must send out), and twenty other mortifications and distresses *profound.*

It was towards the end of spring, in that same year, that he wrote to the same friend thus—

I look forward with pleasure to our Hampstead walk next Sunday. B., through H., has asked me to write verses for the months all round. This also gives me a taste of the country and of poetry, and it is a task that gives a balm to my brain, while it wounds it; which is what prose seldom does. To split my head upon nothing but verses and *Indicators*, is too happy a destiny for me to look to. It would be Clarence's butt of Malmsey compared to the other deaths that I die daily. Excuse this melancholy; I will get up a livelier strain, perhaps a little bit of health, if I can, shortly. To-day I am going to a friend's house, where there is a vapour bath, to see if that will do me any good; and I have faith in it to begin, that is a good thing. Perhaps you will give me a look in to-morrow before twelve, or come and walk out with me then. Pray do if you can. You have no conception how much good a companion does me.

A consciousness that his services in the cause of "progress," as it has been the fashion to call it, had never met with reward in the proportion to their practical effect, produced amongst his friends and admirers a corresponding sympathy, which took the shape of practical endeavours to restore the balance. Those who imagine that Leigh Hunt was indifferent to his pecuniary obligations, in the most curious manner inverted the true state of the case. He was so incessantly haunted by them, so over-anxious to fulfil all that was due from

him, that he often paralysed his own powers. At a later day, he had the means of not only keeping pace with the time, but of recovering these arrears; and although one source of difficulty remained open to a very late year, he never pretermitted the endeavour, and derived immense satisfaction from the progress made. Thus—to anticipate dates for once—in 1846, Leigh Hunt writes to his friend:—

Kensington, 19*th* (?) *February*, '46.

. . . . I also want to talk with you very much about all sorts of things, past, present, and prospective, in esse and in posse, among others my hope of soon not having a single debt undischarged; and meantime, such as I have, are most kind and would never press me. I have only one remaining to an ordinary creditor, and he too treats me like a thorough gentleman. Upon the strength of all this I found myself enabled yesterday to give a few shillings to a poor man in charity, a luxury that I have not had—God knows how long, and I seemed in consequence to sit on my chair taller and nobler. Such tendencies have human beings to mount on little molehills.

The severe pressure of the Chelsea period produced a renewed endeavour, in which Sir John (then Dr.) Bowring took a prominent part to obtain a pension from the Crown; his other friend, again, being one of the most active in co-operating with Dr. Bowring. The result was, I believe, that Lord Melbourne allotted to Leigh Hunt 200*l.* out of the Royal Bounty. Some relief was thus afforded to the weight of difficulty which, as we have seen, however, was by no means limited to the want of funds. There were other constant drafts upon his resources and energies, which were in their consequences worse than mere deficiency of means, and which tended to neutralize the endea-

vours of his friends; so, writing from Upper Cheyne Row, in 1835, he says:—

. . . . Pray show this letter both to P. and Talfourd, and let me tell the latter in the most private corner of your triumvirate ear (for none but such as you three must know such things), that I have at length got a coat to my back, and can have the face to join his friends. Himself of course I should not fear; but it takes much nice criticism both of head and heart to judge properly of the public appearance of a threadbare coat; and it makes me basely uneasy among strangers.

The most serious difficulty to which he alludes amongst his children was grave indeed. It is not true that "there is a skeleton in every house," but in Leigh Hunt's there were two, and one of these haunted him long. At a very early age, one of his sons became a great favourite amongst all his relations and friends for his sparkling vivacity, his good nature, and ready wit. His father always supposed that the premature popularity which these qualities created helped, in the ordinary phrase, to spoil the boy. Most certain it is that he was courted and flattered wherever he went, and that little frailties on his part were more than pardoned —were made a subject of jesting. He very early contracted a habit of "saying the thing which is not;" in this hurting himself far more than any one else; for, as he afterwards learned, there was no degree of trespass which he could commit able to exhaust the charitable construction and conscientious solicitude of his father. When the family removed to Italy, an admirable friend of Leigh Hunt interposed, thinking that the father put too harsh a construction upon the lad's foibles, and his volunteer preceptor took him to join a select circle of

friends at Rome. Here a very careful encouragement was given to all his better qualities, while the utmost vigilance was exerted to check his misconduct, everything being done in the kindest spirit. But, after some time, the friend was compelled to send him home to Florence, then barely eleven years old. The father bestowed increased pains upon him. Teachers were obtained in Italy; and, after the return to England, he was placed at an excellent school, which has turned out honourable and even distinguished men. The master of that school, Mr. Joseph Hine, a very faithful and earnest friend of Leigh Hunt's, specially exerted himself in the boy's behalf. Still in vain. Soon after he finally left school, employment was obtained for him in a public office, but he had to leave it. In the meanwhile, however, the very remarkable violence and irregularity of his conduct had rendered his stay at home intolerable. He had become a dweller abroad, married, had a family, and fell into great poverty. At a very tender age, and in a very curious manner, he contracted a habit of intemperance. Indeed, he seemed to be devoid of any faculty of self-restraint; and this want of control exhibited itself in the most alarming forms. On several occasions he attacked his brothers with knives; on one, actually stabbing his third brother, who was only saved from a deadly blow by one of his other brothers, who saw the danger, and thrust him down *from* the knife. It was after this, that, in order to extort some indulgence from his mother, whose state of health has already been mentioned, he held the carving-knife over the soft part of the head of an infant brother. These facts would not have been mentioned but for two reasons—to let Leigh Hunt's very slight allusion to this skeleton in the house have its full force, and also to explain the conclusion to which the family

ultimately came—that there was some natural deficiency in the man which rendered him morally irresponsible. A very striking remark was made, not long since, to a visitor at the Golden Bridge, near Dublin—a nunnery, whose inmates have a reformatory for discharged female convicts—"that those who are incorrigible to the admirable treatment of the Irish system, seem always to be afflicted with some natural deficiency, and particularly a deficiency in natural affection." Leigh Hunt's second son was clever, amusing, agreeable, and, from first to last, very decidedly what is called "good-natured;" but he appeared to be wholly without that serious instinctive affection which binds families together. In absence, he seemed to lose all recollection of his relatives and familiar friends, with the exception only of his father; for it must be said that, from the very earliest to the very latest, he never lost a sense of deference and affection for Leigh Hunt. At the close of his life, he was sustained by his family; those about him bore their sufferings with exemplary patience; and his bedside was attended in the very last days by his brother Percy and his brother Vincent. There is too much reason to suppose that this erring son, whose trespasses were ever remembered by his family with compassion, had, in a great number of cases, used his father's means, and sometimes his father's name; and it is almost certain that this abuse was extended to cases which have never been traced. The consequences visited Leigh Hunt, sometimes in money lost, sometimes in still more painful forms.

One of the friends who joined in lending their support in difficulty was a lady resident in Wales, who became a faithful correspondent, to whom Leigh Hunt paid a visit in 1835. In the course of this trip

he wrote home; and I select a few passages from his letters.

To Marianne.

Oxford, half-past nine, 21st August, 1835.

Inquiring just now about the post, I learn that I can still get a letter into it, upon paying a shilling; and I believe I should send you a line though it were to cost me a guinea; albeit I keep counting my money every hour, to see if it will last me. We have just had tea, after a journey which I should have thought beautiful, had it been carrying me anywhere except from my wife and children. I flagged much at times, and got very melancholy at nightfall; but love for you all, and the sense of kindness, held me up; and so I think I shall do pretty well, with as many letters from you as you can write, when you know where to direct. We purpose to be at *Stratford* to-morrow noon, to sleep at Birmingham at night, and be in Chester the night following; so I think if you were to direct a letter for me, "till called for," at the post-office, at Chester, I should get it; *and what a delight it would be!*

I am writing with *your* pen; which, besides being a pleasure to me for it's own sake, has saved me from the necessity of using the horrid inn pen. . . . .

Mr. Webbe is a great support to me, and I, no doubt, to him. We sleep in a double-bedded room.

Saturday, 22nd August.

I write this in a very little inn (for we went to too great a one last night) opposite a very little house, containing the following inscription:—"The immortal Shakspeare was born in this house." It is about the size of the smallest chandler's tenement; but next door to it is another little inn, which was the property of Shakspeare's family, called the "Swan of Maidenhead." I thought you would have liked to live there next door to your Shakspeare. . . . .

Mr. Webbe and I have been into S.'s birth-house, and inscribed our names, among a heap with which the walls and ceiling are covered. . . . .

P. S.—The jacket has been of the greatest use; and I feel your kindness whenever I open the bag, or use any of the things you have taken such care about. I forgot to tell you, last night, that I slept close to University College,—Shelley's. I fancied we were laying our heads together. Mr. Webbe continues mending, and is very comfortable. Perhaps the people at Mr. Coles' would like to be told so.

To J. F.

Chelsea, Thursday.

The enclosed was waiting for the bearer, and I keep *him* waiting merely to write this *brief word of* MANY THANKS. God bless you. The business seems in the best train it could be, and B. is very kind. I shall love him as much as I admire him, before I have done. I send you, with the critique, a letter, which I had intended for Mr. Lister, but which I kept back in order to speak to you upon it before it went. It will be best now, perhaps, not to send it at all, especially as the poor *Repository* is about to die; or at all events, to transmigrate into some other shape, altogether unpolitical. I think I have suffered enough in my time, and may finally be laid up, and try to recover of my "scars upon scars," especially as by *silence* on politics I shall compromise no principle, and reform, thank God, *must* progress somehow or other.

The "dramatic flow" has not been interrupted—how can it?—by what keeps the heart flowing.

Perhaps you will ask B. to take the trouble to read my letter to Lister, in case it may suggest anything? And I will also beg you to quote to him my grateful words above; that is, if you think they will give him any pleasure.—Your affectionate friend,

L. H.

Chelsea, 1st October.

. . . . I have got SUCH a subject for a *tragedy!* so full of loveliness and pity, and final funereal awe, and with a hero that so hits M. in every point, tender as well as tremendous, that if he does not fall upon it immediately with all his soul, and bring it out in a very tempest of suddenness, I will send him a letter for his *next* ticket, of which he shall have *reason* to complain. I will tell it you when I come on Wednesday, and perhaps bring a scene, having broken ground this morning. Nobody yet knows of it but my wife. And so no more at present, dear F., from your loving friend,

L. H.

Kensington, 1st January.

. . . . I have done my play; and am ready to read it to thy sovereign ears any day which thou pleasest to appoint to thine in all queesy jollity (coughing to wit),

LEIGH HUNT.

That painted commentary on the fierce text that passed between Wentworth and Pym ("I take leave of you," "But I shall *not* take leave of *you*,") is as good as if he had written it. The contrast between the potent aristocratic assumption of Wentworth's face, and the homelier and dogged but formidable security of Pym's, are equally true to their general characters, and to the feeling of the moment. Pym has just uttered his reply, and is looking abroad upon the region before him, as if he had already become master of it; while the future assertor of arbitrary power, who has instinctively got one hand to the hilt of his sword, is doubting whether *he* shall not put the other, and settle "this fellow" at once: for so his half-backward eye seems to call him. . . . . Then the door-way, the very shield over the door, and the Thames with the boatmen below waiting, are all in excellent keeping. A more pleasing unison of history, biography, and landscape, I have not seen for a long while.

LEIGH HUNT.

Monday, September.

As you are Marvelion, and do collect and historify touching him and his contemporaries, oblige me by letting me seize the opportunity of making a little present (a bliss almost unknown to me); and accept the accompanying volume. It is not worth much on some accounts, but it has its pleasantnesses, and there is a life and portrait of the fine fellow at all events.—And so God bless you, prayeth your ever affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

4, *Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea,*
2nd April, 1835.

. . . . Nevertheless, you are wrong in the *New Monthly* (allow your "sweet *senior*" to say so) about Lamb's imagination, poetry-wards, and of the voluntary order. What you quoted from T. is true, yet it does not undo what I meant, as I will shew you, and P. too, and in T.'s company, if one of you will give me the opportunity and a chop. P. shocked me the other day by writing to tell me that I was "cold" about Lamb's memory, and that everybody, whom he had heard speak of my little notice in the *L. J.*, had "condemned" it. The words were strong, implying moral defect and disapprobation; and my first impulse was to give the public "explanation," which P. said his *Athenæum* remark was intended to give me an opportunity of doing; but he has not sent the *Athenæum* according to promise, and I am not sorry for it; for on second thoughts I would rather have the public think that the last word is against me, than sit down and elaborately enter into what I may consider deficient in a friend's writings. That would be "cold" indeed; and he, on like reflection, will, I am sure, think so too. My notice was hastily written, on the spur of the moment; and I endeavoured to cram into it all I could, after the fashion of one of my little summaries in the *Week*, and judging Lamb as a classic whose fame was beyond a doubt, and could shift for itself. *That* surely was no ill compliment; and what man has

praised him more frequently and warmly than myself in his lifetime? I loved him so much, and so thoroughly understood, let me say, some points of his character, owing to fellow-suffering of no common sort, that if there was any appearance of levity in the article, out of gravest gravity did it issue.—Your affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Chelsea, 12th August.

Your letter reached me yesterday morning (Sunday) bringing me the very kind one from Lady Holland, which you shall see when we meet. You rejoice me by your information about the talk you had, a portion of my heart as well as admiration having always been in that house; and as to myself, though a warm-hearted friend like you may overrate me, and at a great rate too, still it shall be to my honour and glory to have been able to touch such a friend; and I shan't give up all my *right* even to the blessing, whatever modesty might say to nine-tenths of it. . . . . .—Your affectionate friend,

L. H.

Chelsea, Thursday.

I have just heard, doubtless in consequence of some of ——'s doings, that there is a report that *I* have been writing in a conservative paper! I need not tell you how preposterous this is; but it may do me the greatest injury (to say nothing of the pain it gives me), and therefore I write to beg you to do all you can to quash it.

Do you think I had better notice it publicly? I need not mention *him*, you know, but only the report itself. Oblige me with a line to say Yes or No.—Ever truly,

L. H.

Behold the article; and behold, I got home well, the lightning playing before me like a lanthorn; and behold,

I will greet you on Saturday; and behold, I hope by then to have got some final notion of last scene, perhaps your own. Let us see which can realize it first. Seriously, a thousand thanks for the interest you take in my dramaticals, and the good you do them; and believe me ever affectionately yours,

L. H.

Thursday, 6th January.

You know what it is to be in a whirl of business, and therefore, I am sure, will forgive my not being able to send to you directly. I will come to you to-day, if I can by any possibility go *any*where, except on force of business; and Vincent, meantime, brings you the latest news. Pray be as kind and *un-pain-giving* (that is the best word I can think of) to a set of performers, most anxious to do all they can for your friend, as you can find it in your conscience to be; and forgive (but that you will be sure to do) all the troubles of any sort which friends like you and me are willing to forgive one another, knowing there is a clear atmosphere above them all, of love and serenity, in which honest hearts sit sure of one another. You will have a copy of the play the instant I can send it. E. T. will act Genevra charmingly, with a right lady-like heart and tears; A. acts the character of Rondinelli with a solid earnestness; and whatever is good in M. (a most anxious man) will, I am sure, be brought out in Agolanti, which puzzles him with none of the subtleties and the wonderful universalities of Hamlet. Then when young V.'s newness works well on its hinges, he will be a very spirited and graceful actor, and meanwhile he understands my Captain well, and will look him capitally. I have fancied that orders are "drugs" with you, but pray let Vincent bring me back word whether you would like any names (D., or others, for instance, if *he* would not dislike it) to be put upon to-morrow night's list, and for how many (for that is the mode in this instance). And so, my dear F., God bless you; and may Fortune (for I am too reverent to make use of the other word

on such an occasion) do something at last, *in the lump*, if it so please her, for your ever affectionate friend,

L. H.

If I fail, I shall walk quietly off, you know, and go philosophically to bed. "Practice makes perfect," as the copy-books tell us.

. . . The more I think of Henry the Second, the more I am sure he would make a glorious drama, crammed full of interest.

Act I. Becket and he gorgeous, and festive, and sociable.

Act II. Becket an archbishop, and contending with him.

Act III. Becket killed.

Act IV. Rosamond.

Act V. Henry dies of consummated misery, and of the cruelty of his sons.

But at present, as you suppose, I return, "vi et armis," to my existing subject.

"The play! the play's the thing!"

God bless you, prays ever yours truly,

L. H.

Our last evening *was* delightful. May we have many such, happy to all.

Chelsea, Thursday.

. . . Will you let Vincent bring me another volume of *Beaumont and Fletcher?* for I have read two-thirds of the one I have, and suspect I shall not be able to resist going all through with them. Am astonished at what they would have said to you, had you been at their side, insisting upon advance of story, non-superfluities, &c. Am more astonished (ever) at the amazing coarseness they mingle with their delicacies, and the true love they mingle with their false; am delighted with their wit, poetry, and high gentlemanly style, &c. &c. But Lord! what a gentleman, after all, was Shakspeare, even to *their* gentlemen! &c. &c. &c. &c. The wool-

stapler's son, by some divine right of love on the part of father and mother, or whatsoever mystery it was, was a born prince compared with the bishop's and judge's sons.—Ever most sincerely yours,

L. H.

To the Editor of the "Morning Chronicle."

Thursday, 18th February.

Sir,—I am loth to trouble the public with anything that concerns me as an individual; but a report has just reached me that I have been writing in a "Conservative" paper; and as reports sometimes appear to be believed in proportion to their absurdity, you will oblige me by allowing me to contradict it. I have the pleasure of knowing some excellent men of the "Conservative" party, and indeed of all shades of party; and I have been occupied of late with writings of an unpolitical description, such as I hoped might assist the natural tendency which all honourable and generous dispositions have, to do justice to one another: but Reform is endeared to me by the sufferings and consolations of a whole life; I have written much for it, never a syllable against it; and it is not likely that the cause which I loved in its adversity, and which I still love in my own, I should turn against, now that I have the comfort of seeing it prosper.

Believe me, sir, at all events, that the report is totally false. I should as soon think of writing against the sunshine which is now striking upon the table before me, and comforting the world.—Your old and warmest reformer,

Leigh Hunt.

P.S. Perhaps the editor of the *Examiner* and the *Atlas*, the two other papers with which I am best acquainted, will do me the favour to transfer this letter to their columns. And I should take it as a kindness in other Reform papers, which I have not the same pleasure in seeing.

To A. Hayward.*

4, Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea,
6th May, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I was wishing to see the *Law Magazine* a day or two before you sent it me, so you may guess how glad I was to receive it. I was not aware, however, of the note it contained. Many thanks for that also; for the very great kindness which you have contrived to put into little compass; but after what you say in allusion to it in your note, you will not wonder at my requesting that you will be good enough to imply something in your next, indicative of the change in your feelings, especially as I both acquit Lord Brougham of *ill* withholding of his name from the subscription, and hold myself, with reason, a person ever obliged by him. Perhaps, if he happens to have kept it, Mr. Talfourd will show you a letter I wrote on this subject.

You will be mystified at the sight of another letter—the one enclosed—addressed to yourself. The truth is, I put your former communication to me in some such very safe place that I could not find it, and so knew not how to address it at Mrs. Austin's—late as I was in writing it after all. Since then, I have received two letters from Carlyle, the latter yesterday, in which he says that one Kensington house has failed him, and that while Mrs. Austin is looking out for another, he wishes me to increase his chances by looking for one in Chelsea. But he does not say how large a one, or whether

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* In the *Law Magazine* for May, 1834, appeared the subjoined passage as a note: it is necessary to explain the letter in the text:—"This was one of the earliest cases which gave Lord Brougham an opportunity of distinguishing himself. The omission of his name in the list of subscribers to the late edition of Mr. Leigh Hunt's poems, has, consequently, given rise to a trifling degree of observation and surprise: the subscription having been anxiously promoted by distinguished men of all parties, with the view of rescuing that truly amiable man and pleasure-giving writer from the pressure of immediate and unmerited distress."

he wishes it *furnished or unfurnished.* Can you tell me? and will you, if you can, have the goodness to send me word accordingly? You may guess how I enjoy the prospect of having such a neighbour. I hope shortly to tempt you out hitherwards, especially when I can add something so *Germane* to the matter. I reckon upon your not omitting toleration to bad puns in your universality.—Ever truly yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

It liketh me mightily that you like the *London Journal.* They say it is to make me rich! This is a novelty at any rate.

In the preface to Mr. A. Hayward's translation of *Faust,* a remark was made respecting Shelley's knowledge of German; to this the subjoined letter alludes. The MS. mentioned refers to this translation, which comprised the Prologue in *Heaven,* and the *May-day Night Scenes.*

York Buildings, New Road,
4th December, 1832.

MY DEAR SIR,—I had just gone out for a walk when your messenger called on Sunday, and I am ashamed to say that I suffered the whole of yesterday to elapse, without calling your letter to mind; but constant occupation and care must be my excuse. I can give you little information on this subject, but perhaps I could procure you better in the course of a few days, should you desire it. I was away from my friend in another country, when he began to read German, and my impression is, that he did not make any very long or extensive acquaintance with the literature; only what he did read, he would read exquisitely, and with a thorough knowledge of the meaning, making it a point to have a perfect understanding of the letter in order that he might leave nothing unperceived of the spirit. Of the particular state in which the manuscript was left, I have no recollection, except that a few passages were not filled up. I know not what preface you

allude to with initials, but conclude it is something taken from the *Liberal*. I guess the translation to have been made about the year 1820. Yours, my dear sir, very truly,

LEIGH HUNT.

To J. W. DALBY.*

4, *Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea.*
5th March, 1834.

DEAR SIR,—It is a very great pleasure to be able to give any pleasure to those who are so sensible of it, and so worth having it, especially when they think themselves the parties obliged, though they have been the first to show kindness. Pray give Mr. De Wilde my best thanks for his message, and tell him how much it has gratified me. I hope if ever he or you chance to come into this remote region of the London suburbs, you will find me out, and allow me to shake the hands that write such pleasant things, and are so friendly. I hope also you will ramble and peregrinate on paper till your readers tell you to stop; which they will be in no hurry to do, if they are of my mind; for an enjoyment of localities, after that fashion, combines the novelty of the particular portrait with the expression of feelings common and delightful to all,—at least, to all who are capable of delight; and I know very few kinds of writing indeed that are more desirable, especially with that mixture of verse and prose which you have adopted. The French have plenty such. Almost all ours are in verse, and not always worthy of the authors, though I think that notices of them, with occasional extracts, might furnish the social spirits of the *Lady's Gazette* with agreeable work. Chaucer would make an illustrious head to the train, if he had painted localities as he went, or made us

* Among the friends who originally came to Leigh Hunt as literary correspondents were Mr. J. G. De Wilde, the present editor of the *Northampton Mercury*, and his schoolfellow and friend, Mr. John Watson Dalby, now living at Thornbury, near Bristol, but then the constant companion of De Wilde.

feel ourselves on the road with him *as* a road; but he has not. The oldest journey of the kind, I believe, is the *Iter Boreale* of the facetious Bishop Corbet; unless one by Davenant (which I do not remember) be older. Cotton (Walton's friend) has one; Gay, in his *Epistles;* Prior (Down Hall); and there is Drunken Barnaby, whose English version (if my memory is not mistaken) is as good as his Latin. But *new* journeys are the thing; nor is it necessary to go far. The great point is to enjoy, and to feel oneself in the arms of nature and one's "inn," and to give way to the impulses. But I am telling you a great deal which you knew before. Pray continue to give us good proof in the *Gazette*, that you agree with me in these matters; and believe me, dear sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

LEIGH HUNT.

Chelsea, 19th October, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,—Not to keep your messenger longer than I can help, but at the same time not to delay a moment in answering your kindness, I write these few words to say that I value your present most truly, and for two most excellent reasons; first, because it comes from the country and is all OVER country; and secondly and still better, because it comes from the heart. And the verses are worthy of the flowers.

I have been very ill, but am getting well again, after my usual elastic fashion, and am going shortly to give you an account in the *Journal*, of a bit of a tour I have been making, a few golden moments of which were spent at Stratford-upon-Avon. I tell you this, because I know it will please a friend and journal companion like you. Very truly and thankfully yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—I am in a horror about Mr. De Wilde, and Mr. Mackorkell, for not having yet noticed a pretty little fairy song of theirs, which got delayed so long that I became ashamed. Is it too late now? but I will take it for granted it is not, with such men.

Chelsea, 12th March, 1836.

My dear Sir,—I am obliged to write you a short letter in return for your long and very acceptable one, so kind and flattering to me throughout. How can I be otherwise than pleased and proud at such verses on me and mine, and glad that you should make them known wherever it pleases you to do so? Pray treat me with no unfriendly ceremony on this or any other occasion, but have as much faith in me as I have in you.

My health is all the better for my involuntary sabbath. My head (to use the most confused image you ever heard of) *pats me on itself* for a good boy, in being willing to discern "the soul of goodness in things evil;" and says, "here is a specimen of it;" for had I not had the misfortune of being stopped in my writing, I should not have been able to speculate upon writing again with a more comfortable cerebellum,—nay, perhaps not have been able to write at all.

Be sure I have not forgotten my promise of coming to see you; and the weather looks promising for our summer, does it not? albeit March has put on the aspect of a sort of ferocious April. Little Julia is full of thanks to you; and so am I to Mrs. Dalby for her kind message: but why do you not tell me her Christian name? I want to like it, and I cannot do that as long as it is a mere initial. It must arrive at years of orthography. Ever truly yours,

Leigh Hunt.

P.S.—Why I object to that engraving of me, is, that it seems to me to give me a look of *skulking*, which I feel not to be in my character. And there is a *poke* out in the under part of the jaw too severe, for my little well-intentioned effeminate chin. With Mr. De Wilde's assistance, I trust to help you to another likeness by-and-by, which appears to me a better one; though in many respects the one you have is, I have no doubt, very like.

No certain news yet of the Magazine.

Chelsea, 29th June, 1836.

My dear Sir,—You would have heard from me before this, but I have been very ill; so much so, and so long, as to be able to write little to my best friends. You must not, therefore, take this short letter as a proof of unthankfulness to your kind attentions. I am getting better again, and feel as if I should be as well as I was after my two months' rest at the beginning of the spring. *And before the summer is out, I shall be very much disappointed indeed, if I am not able to remind you of your kind invitation to Harefield; most probably about the end of July or beginning of August.* I long to see the place, and to take some strolls with you, and quote verses, and feel ourselves enclosed with all sorts of green nests. I enjoy your little cottage, which cannot be too little or too humble for me, rest assured, as long as there are large hearts in it. I defy you to live in a less cottage than I have done; yet it has held Shelley and Keats, and half a dozen other friends in it, all at once; and they have made worlds of their own within the rooms. Keats's '*Sleep and Poetry* is a description of a parlour that was mine, no bigger than an old mansion's closet.

What a delightful anecdote you tell me of Mr. Haddon. I shall treasure it up. And, pray, thank, in your best manner, dear "Ann Dalby" for her roses, and still more for her words. The goose we eat to-day rejoicing.—Ever heartily yours,

Leigh Hunt.

P.S.—My best remembrances to Mr. De Wilde when you write to him, and thanks for his telling you of Mr. Haddon. You must know that praise from a "Haddon" is doubly pleasant to me, because a boy of that name, who was a "big boy" when I was a little one, was kind to me at school.

I cannot bring the Magazine to bear at present in these political times; though, thank God, my pen never felt stronger for prose or verse (such as they are)—never *so* strong, I think, for the latter. Pardon this vanity; but with certain kinds of friends one thinks out loud.

Chelsea, 29th October, 1836.

My dear Sir,—I know not what you and A. D. must have thought of me for my silence; but I reckon upon your both having very large hearts, with plenty of room for your friends to *err* in and yet be found at home at last; and you must know, that although I am punctual enough with such friends in general, I sometimes take an extraordinary licence the other way, partly from ill health, and partly from a daily hope of being better and able to write them a letter something commensurate with their kindness. In this hope, alas! ill-health is too apt, after all, to disappoint me, and such is the case at present; but I could no longer delay to give you my warmest thanks for the graceful and most overflowing heartiness of your last communications. I do not even blush to receive your praises; for how can I, when you utter them with so sincere, earnest, and kind a face; and when, however much they may surpass my deserts, I see that I *must* deserve something, to have been able to excite so much fancy and feeling in so estimable a brain and heart. Pray, understand that I grasp your hand with grateful emotion,—and allow me to kiss that of A. D. for her flowers and fruit, which I looked upon as *her* words, and very sweet and relishing they were, How quick you were with your sonnet, on the very day! and what a *catalogue poétisé* you have made out of my later effusions! I am particularly glad that you liked my *Cottage*, for you are one of the few persons I particularly thought of in the course of writing it; and I hope you will be one of the first to come and see me in such an one, should I ever possess it, of the ordinary tangibility—which my friends sometimes endeavour to persuade me is not impossible. Meantime, you see we live in the other, where, I assure you, I have seen both you and A. D., though you did not know it. You will think this the less surprising, however, when you consider that you have been there, and seen me, as you proved by your last; only, the next time, I beg you will come in, and take possession of your room, which is a very pretty one, up one pair of stairs (we have no higher floor), and draperied with the good old

large-flower patterns of our ancestors, a hundred years ago; furnished with oak and walnut; and looking into the corner of greensward and flowering hedges which contains my trees.

You guess truly when you conclude it was illness which deprived me of the pleasure of visiting you. Nothing else could have done it, be assured; and I fear it will continue to do so till the next season comes between spring and summer. I have had several invitations, but would accept none of them; and yours will still be first in my list. I never even go from home to pay an evening visit, except to my friend Carlyle, who lives in the street next to me; and even him I cannot visit as often as I wish. And yet, upon the whole, I am better in health than I was a year ago,—and, indeed, greatly so,—doubtless owing to these evening precautions in particular, the night air being very injurious to me. When your last letter came, I was more than usually unwell, and, at the same time, very busy with putting the finishing touches to a sort of *fair* companion to the *Feast of the Poets*, to wit, a *Feast of the Blue Stockings*, or literary women now reigning, whom Apollo invites to a ball and supper. I believe you will see it in the December's *New Monthly*, and hope you will discover some indomitability of animal spirits in it, at all events; but it has run to great length—about 700 lines, these lilies of literature (the ladies I mean) being very numerous. I should have answered your letter, however, instantly, had I not been out, taking my usual walk, for then I should not have had time to think of writing more at length; so I hope you will see that I have done you injustice, out of my very desire to do the reverse. I have taken a latitude out of respect to longitude.

But what is worse, I have hunted in vain in every cranny and corner for a letter I had, giving an account of the *Lounger* from his own original printer.* I thought to have gratified

* Mr. Dalby had asked for some particulars respecting "the *Lounger's Commonplace Book*, and its mystery of an editor, which you once thought of relating in the *London Journal*."

you with this, at all events, but I have searched and re-searched in vain. I expect, however, to see this very gentleman's son this evening (if the amazing fall of snow does not stop him), and will ask him to get his father to repeat the account for me, and you shall then have it;—and, at any rate, I will confer with you again on the subject in the course of a week or two. All other helps which I can give command. The book is very interesting, but your difficulty will be with the author's *opinions*, which it is not easy to leave out without hurting the originality of its character, and yet which are too obsolete and not profound enough to be worth retaining, though piquant from the sincerity and *passion* with which he gives them. Neither is he always correct in his narrations; and the spurious delicacy of this age would have some ground of objection to several of them, in the tendency he has to dwell exclusively upon the animal part of love,—the only portion, in truth, of which he seems to have had much notion; for you may see that in every respect he was a man of strong passions; and that what he took for a sentiment was but a part of them. He would have been startled to hear that he did not love the spiritual enough to be able to do justice even to the animal. Pray, put any queries to me which you think might be of service to you in this matter, and I will answer them when I send you my friend's new communication; and excuse this vile little niggling hand into which I always get when I write at any length and am not at my best. —Ever most truly yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

P. S.—I thought to have had this letter franked by Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, from whom I have expected a notice every day of his being in town; but it has not come.

FROM J. W. DALBY.

Harefield, 13th November, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . . Thank you for your prompt and full response to my application regarding the *Lounger;*

I am looking with solicitude for the narrative you so kindly engage to forward. Mr. Hurst, the bookseller, who is a party concerned in the suggestion of the proposed new edition, knew a little of the *Lounger*, and told me that Mr. Reynell, who was his original printer, knew a great deal more; and Mr. Reynell, I presume, is your informant. You must not let me trespass upon you in this matter; yet I feel the sincerity of your kindness and the value of your hints. I see that the author's opinions will frequently embarrass me; and I had decided upon leaving many of them out of the book, even at the risk you mention of hurting the originality of its character. In other cases, when I retained them, I thought of appending notes of qualification to the objectionable passages, and of corrections to the inaccurate. Will this be the advisable course, or would you point out any other? You have dashed off the *Lounger's* character in a few strokes, and in your own inimitable manner. It is indeed painful to observe how much the animal part of love predominates in him, and how he seems to pride himself on the display of it. Truly would he have been startled at the discovery which you make for him.

The other day I received some friendly inquiries about you all the way from Upper Canada, whither the *London Journal* carried as much sweet teaching as it diffused amongst its readers nearer home. The inquirer, Mr. W. Stringer (whom you will honour with an imaginary shake of the hand when I tell you that he was in the habit of visiting Dr. Wolcot, and cheering his sightless and solitary old age with chatting and reading to him) says—"Can you tell me where I am now to look for our friend Mr. Leigh Hunt? I love him still, some little differences of opinion notwithstanding; and am really concerned to lose the benefit of his taste and industry by the death of the *London Journal*. Everything considered, I have often wondered how he could contrive to throw so much comfort into his writings. Good luck to him, whatsoever he undertakes! and may we speedily find him inhabiting some of his old castles in the air. For-

tunately the *London Journal* concluded with the year; but his *Streets of London* is still unfinished. Pray keep your eye upon his literary proceedings, and let me know about them." He ought to have known me better than to believe I needed to be thus adjured. May we hope to see the *Streets* in a collected form? Stringer himself is (or rather *was*) a writer of some spirit, having, however, like his friend Peter, a tendency to satire rather than to sentiment. . . . . —Believe me, my dear sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

JOHN W. DALBY.

To J. W. DALBY.

Chelsea, 12th December, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am, and have been for some days, in midst of an unusual heap of business and visitors, and write this unwillingly brief letter, in answer to your very kind one, out of pure desperation of being able to find a quieter hour or two to give you. I heartily wish we were living near each other, and that I could give you hundreds; and some day I hope earnestly we shall find ourselves in some such contact, or not too remote to enjoy summer morns and winter evenings together; but at present *you know not how I still struggle in bonds*. Your Hare was a most noble one, and excited our devouring respects. I suppose Harefield was called after his ancestors.

Your kind constancy to a love of my effusions I again witness regularly with never-ceasing thankfulness and pride in retaining the good opinion of so cordial a heart and delicate a brain.

Mrs. Hunt—M. A. H., rather—(Mary Anne) joins with me in kindest respects to A. D. and yourself. Amersham is Walter's birthplace, is it not? Your occupation is very kind to you thus far, in keeping you among the haunts of birds and poets. Oh,—I did not forget the *Lounger*, and often and often have I again spoken of it to the friend in question; but

he is a man luxuriosified up to the eyes in gardens and rose-bushes, and has of late (I believe) completed the excuses of his forgetfulness by being in love! However, I will act the part of a bad conscience, and rouse him like a sting of remorse.

> "Amidst the roses, Mr. Leigh Hunt rears
> His crest indignant, and exclaimeth, 'Lounger!'"

Trusting to communicate something final to you on this subject, I am ever, my dear sir, your obliged and faithful friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

Chelsea, 13th January, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,—I had vowed to myself that I never more would send you any acknowledgments of your kindness without freeing them from their expensiveness by the beautiful magic help of some parliamentary friend, but as I have just received a letter from Mr. D. Wilde, in which he tells me that he shall see you to-morrow or next day, and as I wish to give you a message for him, and the business thus becomes one purely on my own account—in short, a very business-like and payment-anticipation-warranting thing (Bentham's ghost will rejoice in that compound participle), I have taken the liberty of anticipating the payment accordingly, which I know you will excuse, as you have such a delicate tact for all the proprieties. Taking, then, the opportunity of thanking you for your reply to my answer, and for the fresh overflow of Christmas good nature which it brought with it (which I would find fault with if I could, but I cannot, for I never can find any fault with you, except for undervaluing yourself), may I commission you to thank Mr. De Wilde for *his* second letter, and to tell him that yesterday I received, for the first time, really promising *tangible* proofs of the getting on of the *Repository;* so that although I will not baulk his kindness in the *first* instance with regard to advertising in the *N. M.*, I look in future to

being able to give his journal the ordinary (I cannot call so sorry a disbursement grateful) payment common to all advertisers, monthly; I shall confer immediately with my publisher thereon. Say, also, that I thank him extremely for said kindness, which was very well thought of, and to the purpose; and if I had not thus been luckily enabled to look forward as I wish, I would assuredly have done as such a friend wished, and also gallantly speculated upon his recommendations in other quarters; for it becomes "us youth" who think well of one's fellow-creatures, to act as if we did so, and to give them the opportunity (in all handsome reason) of proving that they deserve the good word of our said everlasting juvenility. Lastly, thank him *very much* for his information about Mr. D. God bless you both. It is a beautiful and a *prosperous* sight to see two such natures linked together, for a friendship of like hearts is a *success immense* by itself, apart from those worldly successes which, though not to be despised, are as mere earth to walk upon, without human beings to walk on it. And your feminine portions appear to be right harmonious portions, which is a success *immenser*. The elder made me younger; therefore I may venture, at this distance, and with her husband's permission, to give A. D. a kiss for it. —Most sincerely yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—It would have vexed me more to see that mention of the *Casket* in the *Atlas*, but for two reasons; first, that I conceive the writer meant chiefly to gird at the selectors for quoting other quoters instead of the original authors; and secondly, and chiefly, because I feel sure that he does not know the *Casket* or its editor. I myself *do* know both him and several writers in the *Atlas*, and I will take care that the latter are duly acquainted with my friend's merits.

What weather! The nights are what they call in Sweden "*steel* nights." Isn't that a good phrase?

Chelsea, 20th June, 1838.

My dear Sir,—You must not talk of "debtor." There is such regard, I trust, among us all, as under no circumstances can be bought or paid for with money, or have anything to do with buying and paying; and to say the truth, I was going last night to beg your acceptance of a bust, but, as my wife's representative, was withheld by a modest doubt: I did not know what right we had to conclude that you must needs be glad to be burdened with it on a journey. Pardon me for the unloving look of this hesitation. Mrs. Hunt is going, next week, to put two or three of the busts in presentable condition, for some friends, *i. e.* take the seams off, and oil them; and one of them will come to you and Mrs. Dalby, by coach, with thanks for all kindness, and heartiest regards from her and your sincere friend,

Leigh Hunt.

Chelsea, 22nd October, 1838.

My dear Sir,—You overwhelm me with so many repeated kindnesses and honours, that albeit I am as little impatient of obligation from those whom I love, as some of those vainest of vain people called "the proud," would have us be of obligation. Yet it gives me a provoking desire to do what I cannot, forward every wish you may have, on the instant,—load you with all sorts of impossible gifts, and above all, come and bring them myself, or at least, come before them, and feel myself in a sort of "cottage home," of mine as well as yours, till I can get one of my "own," in the ordinary sense of the word. *But*—but—BUT—when will the world have *done* "butting," and let us pastoral people live in a wiser peace? Come, I certainly will nevertheless, when the spring comes; for I feel, Heaven willing, that I shall be better by then in every respect, health and all, thanks to a very kind and wise physician, who has taken me under his wing (for I was obliged to apply to one at last); and part of my non-going to see friends at a distance has arisen from a home-uneasiness in leaving my numerous family. Meantime, I have been

writing a play (which has frightened the conventionalities of the theatre) and am writing another, which is to be unequivocally harmless, and therefore I fear not half so good. But if theatres are to be the medium of dramatic profit, theatres must have their way. My friends tell me that my play is the best thing I have done, and that I have developed a decided dramatic faculty. What think you of that in my old age? But I suppose the older one lives, the more dramatic, *i. e.*, the more many-other-people-knowing (to use an Homeric compound) one grows.

Pray make my loving respects to Mrs. Dalby. When I thank one, of course I thank you *both*, a beautiful thing to be able to say with cordial truth to a married couple: and Mrs. Hunt joins me in doing the same. Ever, my dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

I am glad you recognized me in M. C., I ought to be ashamed to ask,—through a friend of mine more so; but pray tell me when you write next, whether the proposed edition of the *Lounger* is still going on.

Your verses are beautiful, and brought grateful tears into my eyes.

Chelsea, 2nd March, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,—I regret that I am forced to send you a very short letter, in return for your abundant one, and its equally well-stocked companions (I know not which of the two is the more overflowing, the hamper, with its wine and apples, &c., or the letter with its heart and soul, and all the delicacies of friendship). I shall receive with the greatest satisfaction, the honour of the dedication you speak of; and in the package which Mrs. Hunt is going to send, you will find your proof-sheets marked in the places which I like best, and also with a comment or two that may suggest something agreeably to what you are good enough to request. Pray thank Mr. De Wilde for *his* thanks; also for the repeated

evidences he gives of remembering me in the *Northampton Mercury*, and particularly for what he has said in to-day's number, of myself and my friends, in the *Musical World*. It delighted me to have that opportunity of speaking of him and yourself, and now that I find it pleases you both, the pleasure of it comes back to me like flung fragrance. I *am* better, thank God and Dr. Southwood Smith; and if they won't act my play (but I hope they will), there shall be *two* plays printed very shortly, depend upon it,—to "shame the rogues!" You remember what the poor poet says to Pope,—

> "Fir'd that the house reject him, 'Sdeath I'll print it,
> And shame the rogues. Your interest, sir, with Lintot.'"

If I can contrive to indulge myself with a visit to Amersham, when the wild roses are out, may I ask whether a lad of mine, of fifteen, would, in any respect, be in the way, as my fellow-traveller. The smallest bed in the world would do for us at night, for we are very good friends. It is my youngest son,—Vincent—I think you have seen him.

If the package can bring this letter in time, it shall come by it; if not, you will excuse my paying the post, as I find the envelope has given it a *value* I did not look for. Most sincerely yours,

L. H.

Kindest regards and thanks to dear Mrs. Dalby.

To G. J. De Wilde.

4, *Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea,*
9th May, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I am compelled to write you a very short answer to your letter received this morning, but it is one full of thanks and good wishes. Your ham, I think, is a very proper May present, eatable cold, and fit for the fields. Besides, it came to me at a moment when I was much harassed, and substituted a pleasant train of thoughts for

an unpleasant one; so that Mrs. De Wilde, not only cured the ham, but cured me. As to her being unused to such offices (I mean the former), I guess she is one of the leaders of graceful lives in all things; and being such, can naturally be useful on all reasonable occasions.

With best wishes, dear sir, to you and yours, and hopes that I shall see you and Mr. Dalby, together or separately, the next time you come to town — I am your obliged and sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—My health tries me hard, as usual; but I hope now, for myself, as well as others, to keep it. A mighty help!

P.P.S.—I recognize you and Mr. Dalby with constant pleasure in the *Ladies' Gazette*. Your vindication of the Owl particularly pleases me. The only fault I ever find with either of you is when you misgive yourselves. Pray add entire faith to your hopes and charities; and, as a part of it, take for granted none of those theories you speak of about the selfishness that is mixed up with our expressions of gratification. We *cannot* omit ourselves in our very pleasures; *and why should we?* The question is, *do we include others?* Whenever we do the *self*-ishness cannot be merely SELF-ish. Something which is not self is in it; even though self could not be equally happy without it. *That* would be true selfishness and pure — self-sufficient. The metaphysicians want a new term to help them in this argument—*other*-ishness. I have a good mind to write an article about it; only the opposite opinion is so rooted in most men that there might be a hazard of their taking mere preconceptions for something stronger than anything I could say. And then love is a better thing than reason at all times, and more persuasive: so, perhaps, we had better go on encouraging people to love one another, and leave the metaphysicians to shift for themselves. Or, if I handle the subject, I will put Love first; and make him seem to argue while he is only loving. You will find a mention of Stothard in last Wednesday's *Journal*.

After all, supposing all people were as selfish as some think, and could not help being so, why should they plague themselves about a necessity of their nature, provided others were included in their satisfaction? The happiness of all is the great point, and not the metaphysical opinion which individuals hold as to the nature of it. My short letter has become a long one!

Chelsea, October, 1834.

My dear Sir,—Many thanks for taking so much interest in the well-being of my supplements. The books you speak of would be highly welcome, and I would take the greatest care of them. I should like to see them, if only for the "pictures," of which I am as fond as a child. Besides, I have a child's recollection of Grignion, Rooker, and Wale; the first an excellent engraver (if I mistake not); the second good also, with Michael Angelo for his Christian names; and the third, a quaint designer of gawky men and slipshod ladies, in buckram coats fluent as drapery, mob caps, and sketchy, lax faces. I like him prodigiously, without having the least admiration for him. He designed for the late editions of Pope and the *Tatler*. But your work, I doubt not, would be of serious use to me; so that utility and amusement thus going together, and the parcel being *books*, and I being a great boy, fifty years of age this month, and not yet out of my teens, pray send me the delightful brown-paper packet immediately.—Ever truly yours,

Leigh Hunt.

Chelsea, 16th October, 1834.

My dear Sir,—The flattering wish you express to know my birthday makes me send you this by post, as a notice in the *Journal* would be too late. I hope I shall be in time enough to have my health drunk on Sunday, the 19th, for that is the day. I will add, as you are a Middlesex man, and a rambler, and, perhaps, not unacquainted with the spot, that I was born at Southgate. The books (for which I give you

many thanks) I certainly could not find it in my heart to keep, seeing what old friends they are, and how naturally you must like them; though otherwise, and had you been a rich man, I would not have grudged you the satisfaction of your generosity. Allow me to say that I can see you are a truly generous man; and for that reason, as this letter is chiefly my concern, I venture to copy your Northampton considerateness, and pay the postage.—Believe me, cordially yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

FROM G. J. DE WILDE.

Northampton, 22nd December, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR,—You will, I know, allow me to place a dish upon your Christmas table. If I were a rich man I should make a bolder claim, and try to rival the Genii of the Lamp, or that excellent spirit of more recent times, the Bottle Hill Fairy, in arranging for you a fitting banquet. In that case, I might be of real good service to you. As it is, I can only show that I am not ungrateful for the gentle dew which you scatter so profusely—blessing him that receives, I fear, more than him that gives. And yet hardly so; for, after all, the truest abundance must be at the source.

At all events, I know that I am a better, as well as a happier man for your writings.

My wife and myself will drink your health and the healths of those who are dearest to you, on Christmas Eve and Day—the lady "noble to the core;" the "hand-in-hand companion" of *Foliage*, and the "Champion of Truth" in the *Repository*, and the sweet face painted by young Laurence; and others of whom we only know, with Wordsworth's little maiden, that they are Seven. J. W. D. and A. D. will be paying, at the same times, the same cordial homage at Amersham.

My Christmas-box is an odd one, coming from the country. But, in truth, I have too little leisure, and am, besides, too much of a Cockney to be a sportsman. So it happens, some-

times, that I do not see a pheasant, or a partridge, or a hare (unless upon a nail at the poulterer's door), from year's end to year's end. By-the-by, I have had thoughts of quarrelling with your invidious exception as to hunting the fox, the justice of which you seem yourself to have disproved in the two very next lines:—

> "I'd never hunt, except the fox, and then
> Not much, for fear I should fall hunting men,
> And take each rogue I met for a stray soul
> *That hadn't rights, and might not eat his fowl,*"

Do I misapprehend you?

I hope the *Monthly Repository* is very prosperous and full of hearty promise, and that your health does not suffer from the labours and anxieties necessarily connected with it.—Believe me, my dear sir, ever your sincere and cordial admirer,

G. J. De Wilde.

To G. J. De Wilde.

Chelsea, 3rd January, 1838.

My dear Sir,—I know that you are kind enough, considering the state of my health and avocations, not to be disconcerted when I take the liberty of delaying to answer a letter for a few days. The time, however, in the present instance, is not quite so long as it appears; for though you wrote on the 22nd, your parcel did not reach me till the 26th, the day after the one on which we presume its eloquent enclosure was intended to enliven our table. Many thanks for it. It seems a very fine one, worthy of a Northampton *Mercury;* and no doubt we shall find it so; for we are still keeping it against a friend's visit. I am glad you are no sportsman; for sportsmanship in people with heart and brain (and there are plenty such) bothers one. One doesn't like it, and it seems a foppery to object to it. However, one must speak as one thinks, when writing about it, and so I must

continue to object, and am glad I have you on my side. As to the fox, you are right in your conjecture. It came across me as I was in the midst of the passage, that he had as much right to his fowl, as the squire, or the lawyer; so in implying their rights, I meant to imply his,—not without an intimation inclusive, that the lawyer was as great a fox as he. Not that I have any objection to lawyers, as Tom, Dick, and Harry; especially as I have the pleasure of knowing some excellent fellows among them; ay, and squires too; nay, parsons (who indeed, when they are excellent, are delicious,—the mixed consciousness of their office, their good will, and their common infirmities making them super-eminently Christian and charitable—my compliments to the Rev. Mr. Haddon). Besides, one must not object to others' no very unfellow-creaturish spirit, lest they have double reason to object to ourselves; for charity has more sound reasons for beginning at home than the proverb means to imply. I should apologise to you for occupying my paper with these commonplaces; but there are truisms which it does people's hearts good to utter to one another; and this, I conceive, is the main part of the secret of what you so delightfully tell me of the good which my writings have done to yourself. Such things are said to me now and then by others; and you cannot imagine (which means you *can*) how they delight me, and what payment I find them for all personal suffering. . . . .

God bless you, my dear sir. My wife begs her best compliments and thanks to Mrs. De Wilde and yourself; I must not omit, as I vexatiously did in my last, to thank you not only for the numerous extracts which you do me the honour and good to make from the *Repository*, but for the excellent and truly manly, right-spirited things which I so often find in the leading articles of your journal.

My "hand-in-hand companion" has at length quitted me, *for the first time in his life*, to go and be editor at Stockport, of the *North Cheshire Reformer*. You may judge how I feel; but it is for the best. He would otherwise send you his thanks too, as my little Julia does, and Jacintha (born, so to

speak, under a bed full of hyacinths), and Percy Shelley, and Henry, and Vincent Leigh Hunt—all good fellows and fellow*esses*—though I say it who shouldn't.—Ever most truly yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—I have had hearty remembrances lately from Amersham. Dalby is one of the names, with me, for "the porcelain clay of the earth."

To D. L. RICHARDSON, ESQ.

5, *York Buildings, New Road.*—[But Mr. Moxon's address is the safer, as I hope to move speedily. This letter has (Jan. 22, 1833) been delayed some weeks, in order to send it you free of expense.]

MY DEAR SIR,—I must leave your own heart and imagination to judge of the feelings with which I received your letter. It is a fine thing to be thought of at all at so great a distance; but to be thought of in this manner, and to be treated so kindly by so many people, is affecting indeed.* I wish I could say anything to Sir Charles Metcalfe,† calculated to give him a twentieth part of the pleasure which his gentlemanly impulse of liberality has given me; and, indeed, I wish I could make a huge long arm, and stretch it over seas and lands, and shake the hand of every one of my new and unknown friends, who have felt thus for a stranger. But it is to you, my dear sir, I owe most. It is you who have excited all this sympathy, and I am glad to see you surprised at the amount of it. I fancy you a magician, waving his wand, and astonished at the beauty of the visions which he has himself conjured up. The Indian addition to our list is a

* This is an allusion to the Calcutta subscription to his poems. The subscriptions rapidly followed an appeal in Leigh Hunt's favour published in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*.

† Afterwards Lord Metcalfe.

very serious good to me, more so than I will distress you by detailing why, especially as the subscription here, though it flowed admirably at first, and will be eternal flattery to my recollections for the names it included, has not proceeded according to its promise. Yet I assure you, and I am sure you will believe, that the sympathy shown me by my Eastern friends, the goodwill and manifestations of heart, evinced by their moving in the business at all, is more valuable to me than the subscription itself. I wish you would make my acknowledgments to Messrs. Samuel Smith and Co., and to such other gentlemen of the press as it may not be inconvenient to you to convey to them, not excepting the editor of the *John Bull*, who would find me, perhaps, a better Christian than he seems to suspect. I must find means of sending you a little book of mine, entitled *Christianism; or, Belief and Unbelief Reconciled*, which a friend has printed for private circulation, and which I would get you to show him. At all events, his conduct has been Christian on this occasion, and so I assure him is my gratitude. It gives me a peculiar species of gratification to think the *native* editors of the *Reformer* and the *Inquirer* have interested themselves on my behalf. You know I delight in associations of old books and romances; India to me is an Arabian Night country; all the modern commonplaces of it, which I have never seen, are accustomed to give way in my mind before its old exclusively Oriental aspect; and in finding that I have friends there, time and space seem to roll apart like a cloud, and I fancy myself a new kind of living, yet ancient, Sinbad, taken by the hand after a shipwreck by strangers with dusk faces and white drapery, under a glowing sun. But above all, do not let me forget to take particular notice of your article in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, so handsome, so well written, so more than kind to me. I have certainly in my time endeavoured to sow pleasant thoughts in the minds of my fellow-creatures: and I have done it, I will venture to add, at times when my only pleasure consisted in the hope of giving some to others. Neither have I got much in return, but that hope. But when

I see an article like yours, I reap a thick harvest in a small compass. Many thanks for it from the bottom of my heart. It is the one that has touched me more nearly than any which had been written since Mr. Talfourd's, which I was delighted to see you had got, and which must have given you great pleasure, even as a piece of good writing. I will do what you tell me about the books. There is more than enough, I am sorry to tell you, on hand: not because people are unkind, but because they are absorbed at present in over-melancholy prose affairs of politics and taxation, and, perhaps, because they want a little imagination: but I fear also that the drawback you anticipated in one of your closing paragraphs had had great effect, and that everybody on those occasions is apt to think that *everybody else* will do what is required, and render their help unnecessary. It is a mistake on which I could enlighten them, but they know not what it costs me. . . . .

Dear sir, as long as I live, I am your grateful debtor and affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

To JOSEPH SEVERN.

4, *Cheyne Row, Chelsea,*
1*st August,* 1834.

MY DEAR SEVERN,—I snatch a moment, though it be but a moment, after a hard day's work, that I may have the pleasure, not only of introducing to you a young artist, Mr. Dallas, a friend of my eldest son, and highly esteemed by him, but of asking you under my own hand how you do, and pretending to myself that I am standing for an instant in the thick of Rome! I cannot look even upon this bit of paper without something like respect as well as envy, to think that it will really be there, where I, the sender of it, and the human soul, cannot find a way to do it. I repeat the word to myself like a fine bass note—Rome—mixing it up with the murmuring of the great sea of ages, and with tenderer voices of the

departed, and long, indeed, to be with you. God bless you, ever heartily wishes your sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

To CHARLES OLLIER.

4, *Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea,*
16*th November*, 1836.

MY DEAR OLLIER,—I have been going to write to you, nay to come and dine with you, any time since you saw me last; but I conclude you will have guessed how it was that I broke my engagement—in *letter*. I certainly did not break it in spirit, nor mean to break it at all, if you will still name your day; but I had scarcely seen you, when I was requested to resume my labours in the *True Sun*, and little as they have to show for it, they are indeed labours, and have kept me ever since tied here morning and evening; for you know I have an ultra conscience on matters of criticism; and accordingly (oh! unheard-of fact!) I read what I criticise; and so I am reading and writing from morning to night, with the hasty interval of a walk. Let your day, if you please, be at the beginning of a week, instead of the end of it, and your dinner-hour early. Will three be too early? For I am obliged to be regular in my diet, and must also have a good afternoon with you. Meantime, will you be very generous, and get my *Titian* together for me.—With best remembrances to Mrs. Ollier, ever truly yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

4, *Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea,*
Friday, 28*th June* (*no year*).

MY DEAR OLLIER,—My new play will be most glad of your presence on Monday next, if you can come and encourage your old friend's new aspirations. You will see other friends of ancient and merry times,—Novello, Clarke, Harry Robertson, &c.,—all capable of merriment still, thank God, especially when thus renewing old meetings. So you must come, and show that you are as young as the rest, which

you are especially bound to do, as an immortal philogynist. My first play, I fear, would have stood the best chance of the approbation of the author of *Inesilla*. There are two passages in particular, which I flatter myself might have touched him a little on his favourite sides of love and *fright*. But loving any verse as he does that has any love and sincerity in it, especially by the help of old friendship, I trust he will not be altogether dissatisfied with my second.—Ever truly his hearty and faithful friend,

L. H.

Chelsea, 3rd July, 1839.

My dear Ollier,—I received your kind letter yesterday just as I was obliged to go out; and unfortunately, by the time I returned home, it was too late for the post. Most unfortunate is it, that I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you this week, nor even of looking forward to it the week following owing to work which I have to do myself; but if you can come the week after next, *and will choose your own day*, and name your own hour for tea, we will have some of Mrs. Hunt's ancient souchong, and a lobster-salad for a bit of supper (or what not), and you and I will set in for one of our "glorious evenings," and you shall have no *whole* play, thank God (no such absorption of our time in one thing, however kindly I [*hiatus in MS.*] sure you are disposed to it), but we will have *picknings* of books and manuscripts as of lobsters, and have our old laughs and chats over new as well as old fancies, and be more than ever Charles Ollier and his affectionate friend,

Leigh Hunt.

Chelsea, 15th July, 1839.

My dear Ollier,—The brevity of this letter is occasioned by my answering yours the instant of its arrival, at a moment when I am going out. Imagine it, nevertheless, crammed full of all the welcomes you or I could desire, with Mrs. Hunt's love into the bargain,—no meagre or fugitive addition; and

pray come at the hour you mention on Friday, and we'll "souchong" it, and Spenserianise, and God knows what; in short, have ever new old times. I fancy our table already beside us, with volumes, &c. upon it, and you and me laughing, and *seriosifying*, and thumping our respective knees with enthusiasm, after the good old fashion,—Ever most heartily yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

Will "Whip" allow its quondam over-hearer,—with great respect,—to recall to mind that mystic, and fierce, yet somehow tender appellation, and is it possible that she might come with you?

Chelsea, March, 1840.

MY DEAR OLLIER,—It was only late last night that the *Naval and Military Gazette* at length got into my hands. A thousand thanks for the notice. You spoke to Mrs. Hunt of its being short; but it contains more than the *lengths* of many other notices. You have crammed it full of praise and heart, and I love it the more for its very partiality. But to think that you have not yet seen the play performed! and Miss Tree has gone out of town, too, till Easter, and it will not be performed again in town till she returns! If you do not go *then*, the first night, I don't know when I shall be able to see yourself, for till you do I shall not have the face to come to Paddington, which will cut me off from one of the pleasantest evenings I ever spend. I do assure you, in soberest veracity (and you know I have been a martyr to truth in my time) that in looking back to the triumphs of my first night, *I always feel a bit of it blighted* (like the spoilt corner of some finely-bound book) because Charles Ollier was not there to witness the success of his old friend. Hoping shortly to be living nearer to you, when assuredly no such thing (if the gods have any more such for me!) can ever happen again, I am ever, indeed, your affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—I write this in the midst of hurries tremendous,

which must account for my handwriting's getting into such a state of slovenly precipitation.

To Thomas Weller,

4, *Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea,*
16*th January*, 1836.

My dear Sir,—I am truly thankful for the kind interest you take in me. The *London Journal* was discontinued with an abruptness almost as suprising to myself as to you, owing to some mysteries of partnership which I cannot explain; and I could not take leave of my readers, because I hoped, *beyond* the last moment, to be able to carry it on, in which hope, owing to the shortness of the time, I was unfortunately disappointed. I should not have died with a "groan," however, let my decease have never been so unwillingly—*that* not being my fashion, among the many mortalities which it has been my fate to go through. I may call upon you to bear witness that I have never been unjust to the large beauty and delightful capabilities of this world around us, whatever may have been my own petty sufferings. Even the present juncture, painful as it is to me, brings with it one good, perhaps eventually the greatest that could have been done me just now; for my involuntary leisure *forces* me to rest my brains: and, little as they may have had to show for it, they have been well tried. By this you will see that I am writing in no other publication at present, but I hope soon to begin again. Next week I shall apologise in the daily papers for not taking leave of the readers of the *London Journal*, and at the same time I shall mention my hope of renewing the old intercourse in the shape of a Magazine. I propose to call it *Leigh Hunt's London Magazine*, for they say I must keep as much as possible of the old name; but it is very difficult to set a new publication afloat, however willing certain readers may be to hail it.

Whenever I think of Croydon, I think of walnuts and (I know not why) of cherries. Perhaps because one good thing makes one think of another, and pleasures are apt to come in

"knots." This makes me fancy that you may be intimate with other kind anonymous *correspondents* of mine in your town (as well as readers); and if so, I beg you to make my compliments, and say how sorry I am to part with them. I need not add how much T. W. R. is included in the regret, and how sincerely I am his obliged, humble servant,

LEIGH HUNT.

To MARY ANNE ORGER.*

Chelsea, June.

MY DEAR MRS. ORGER,—It is all owing to Caroline that I cannot have the pleasure of being with you this evening; for if she had not been so beautiful a player, Percy would not have been tempted to quit his work on Sunday evening; and if Percy had not quitted his work on Sunday evening, he would not have it to do on Monday evening; and if I could have devoted Monday evening to the corrections of it, and reading it through, I should not have been forced to devote Tuesday evening to said correction; and if I had not been forced to devote said Tuesday evening in said manner, I could have gone to the play with dear Mrs. Orger, and been as happy as a holiday lad.

When you come back from the country, will you invite me again? The reason why one evening presses upon another in this manner is, that I had engaged to bring my play to town this morning, all ready for perusal, and that I must now change this morning for to-morrow evening (for, as to morning itself, I am forced to be at work otherwise). Pray don't let Caroline forget a ticket for me on her *debut*, for I shall not forget her then or afterwards.—Your obliged and faithful

L. H.

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* The well-known actress, esteemed by all who knew her, and heartily beloved by those who knew her well. She was an old and intimate friend of Mrs. Hunter's, and Leigh Hunt made her acquaintance on his return from Italy in 1825.

Kensington, 19th November.

My dear Mrs. Orger,—We are all in a state of great distress here at Julia's not being able to be with you this evening, particularly Julia herself, and know not what you will think of us. We hope, however, that Vincent will have been with you; that this letter will arrive not long after him; and that meanwhile it will have been raining not merely cats and dogs, as it does here, but lions and tigers, so that you may know in *Mon*ster Street what has detained her. Mrs. Hunt endeavours to give us ease by saying that she told you of the chances of bad weather and full omnibuses, when you were good enough to speak of Julia's coming to see you; and several things conspire to-day to put matters at their worst, among which is the circumstance of the servant's having once got wet through already, so that Julia loses her Negri as well as her kind friend in his neighbourhood. She told you the other day of Vincent's vain endeavours on foot, and his mother's in *fly*, to find you out, but all these contretemps only serve to aggravate the mischance. However, we know you, luckily, to be one of the most reasonable and kindly of women, and we believe as much of the queen of pianoforte players, and hope as much (from all we hear of her) of Miss Lincoln. And so now I am going to put all your good-natures to the test, by asking you (seeing that the gods are so bent at present on our not coming to Munster Street) if you will all come to us, and take tea and supper, some early evening, and so convince us, in the best and most generous of all possible manners, that you take in good earnest our explanations and regrets of these most unfortunate accidents. Say Sunday next, if Sundays suit you, or Saturday, or Friday, or any day; and pray give our particular respects to Miss Lincoln, Julia's especially, and say how sorry we are to have brought her twice from home to no purpose. The same to Caroline; but I reckon more impudently upon pardon from her, for young-old acquaintance sake. However, mind, we feel we have no right to *expect* you—hardly, perhaps, to ask you; but the impulse prompts us; and you must know we never take

liberties except with those whom we respect. We do not feel enough for others to venture them. So pray come all three, if you possibly can, and so give the kindest answer to this letter of mine, ever most truly,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S. Tea at six, if you will come; salad at nine; pianoforte in tune.

To GEORGE L. CRAIK.

Chelsea, 2nd July, 1838.

MY DEAR CRAIK,—In my desire to be with you to-day, I hastily told Mr. Weir I would come to dinner; but I am sure you will not be offended when I change it to tea. My state of health renders a dinner with me a mere piece of self-denial. . . . I am now better in health, owing, among other things, to abstinence from late hours and the meals of luckier stomachs, and I must try hard to keep myself so, even to the loss of friends over their wine (an hour which I give up with a sigh).

I will come between six and seven, which is allowing you the said hour for your wine, and half an hour for meat and pudding—a generous calculation, when it is considered how much I envy it. Item, I will bring you my *Violets*, that you may see I can still feast in imagination, whatever be the sorriness of my practice.

What fine, thick-leaved, basking, green, glorious weather! I am out in Hyde Park every day, and find it difficult to go along without whistling or singing, so I make verses instead. This is the worst of living in a polite state of nature: walking in parks instead of forests.—Ever truly yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

Friday, 24th May, 1839.

MY DEAR CRAIK,—Will you be kind enough to read the enclosed letters from and to MacFarlane, and then either forward the letter to him (if you are going to send), or bear it with you on your envied journey on Monday?

I met your three little girls in the Lane yesterday, going home like doves to the pigeon-house, and stopped and was a boy with them for a few minutes, and had a chat and laugh about school-books and bread-and-butter. So you see I shall have had a bit of green lane, after all, between this and three weeks. Alas! why cannot we enjoy the good green lanes all our life, and be boys and girls as long, only a little older? That would be a pretty life, and worthy of the good lanes God has given us, and that nobody goes into but the Craiks, the MacFarlanes, and their sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

TO SOUTHWOOD SMITH.

Chelsea, 1st August, 1839.

. . . . I am expecting to send you news daily from Macready, who said he would write to me, and of whom I have still hopes, and *greater* ones, though no certainty. He would not hear me read more than one act. He says that every word requires weighing, step by step, and that he shall perhaps read the play three times over! I am told, however, by his friends, that this looks well. He was very kind and hospitable; and I floundered in a luxurious down bed, grateful and sleepless. . . .

Chelsea, 25th February, 1840.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—Though in your considerate delicacy you not only contrive to let me know that you have a copy of my play, and also thenceforward leave me "alone in my glory," yet, though I have indeed been in a whirl of letter-answering up to this moment, and could not command copies of said play as I wished in the first instance, you must know, in the first place, that one of the second, and, ergo, *complete* edition *must* be yours,—and secondly, that I have thought of you and yours very often, not forgetting the Sanatorium (as I hope you saw in *Spectator* and *Examiner*). But your expectation of the meeting, I see, was not fulfilled; and this letter comes partly to

know when it will be,—partly to say, that it seems to be politic to have delayed it, since the public can only entertain but one idea in their beloved heads at a time, and will not even go properly to the play till the Queen has been;—finally, it comes to say that I meet with difficulties on the "two guinea a week" score, among those who say they would gladly avail themselves of the project. In vain I talk to them of cheapness in the end, certainty, luxury, skill, &c. They acknowledge all, but rejoin that clerks and apprentices, &c. *would rather spend a larger sum in the long run, by* DRIBLETS (*as the apothecaries let them do*) than so much out of their incomes at once. What say the projectors to this?—Ever your obliged and affectionate friend,

L. H.

P. S.—I write in a slovenly hurry, from *access of business. Mem.*—As I fear to go out just now (except when Sanatorium wants me), I think a friend or so might give an evening look in upon me, especially a certain pearl with a certain priceless picture. I am at home every evening during this sharp weather. But *she* is healthy. Item, so I believe are doctors.

To Robert Browning.

Chelsea, 15th April.

My dear Sir,—Your *Corelli* gratified me extremely. The only pleasure I had in the other was in looking at the beautiful name (*Arcangelo Corelli*), and thinking how very unlike the face must have been. Yours, in the rich pulpy lips, mild eyes, and yet, somehow irritable expression, must come much nearer to the aspect of the sweet and sensitive musician, whose name, I think, was singularly happy, for no man seems to me to have written such air-drawn, trust-heaven-and-earth strains as he did. When you return from the country, I hope you will not forget the promise you made me of again coming to see me. It will be both a pleasure and an honour to, dear sir, yours truly,

Leigh Hunt.

To Charles Reynall.

Upper Cheyne Row, 1st December.

My dear Charles,—After *many* trials, it vexes me to be obliged to say that I find I cannot do these verses. I know not how it is, unless my other tasks make me stupid. Forgive me for having undertaken to do what I have not done; and oblige me, if you can, with finding out something that *I* am able to do; for it truly vexes and mortifies me not to have gratified, in this instance, so kind a man and a friend as you.—Ever truly yours, Leigh Hunt.

To W. S. Landor.

4, *Upper Cheyne Row,*
2nd February, 1838.

My dear Sir,—I fear you must have been surprised at seeing the very brief quantity of *High and Low Life* given in the February number of the *Repository;* but instead of being a liberty taken with your kind contributions, it was the reverse; for though you gave me a *carte blanche* as to omissions with regard to the old portion of copy, I did not like to assume a like privilege as to the new, without asking it of you; and there are two grounds on which I must do so; first, that *one* of the late poems is a little *too* good, and jovial, and *innocent* for the *many*, a little too much of the Golden-Age order (Heaven knows *I* have no objections to it, and think the world would be much nearer Heaven if their virtue were more open-hearted and *un-evil-making*); and second, that in your satires on the ultra-simple style of poetry, the impression is that you are girding at Wordsworth; and though he certainly is ultra enough on that side, yet the *Repository* (its readers and myself), in common with most people now-a-days, entertains so much reverence for him, that it would give me more pain to proceed with them than I am sure you would wish. Pardon me, if I am mistaken in this supposition, and excuse the whole liberty I am taking; you

know the admiration I entertain for your genius; but candour is the more due to you on that account, and I feel assured that, as you know out of what spirit it proceeds, you will not like me the worse for it (as far as I may presume on possessing your regard).

I have troubled Mrs. Dashwood to become the medium of this letter's transmission, as I do not know your direction, and was anxious not to lose further time.—Ever, my dear sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

LEIGH HUNT.

P.S.—May I reckon that I may make what selections I please from the pleasant *E Profanis* of Mr. Stivers's Muse? I am anxious to retain all I can.

FROM WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Bath, St. James's Square,
6th February, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,—Whatever I send you, in supplement or continuation of *High and Low Life*, is quite as much at your discretion as what I first presented to you. The *attempts at simplicity* were introduced for the correction of the vice now prevalent in English poetry. Wordsworth is certainly the man whose authority has produced and fostered it. Now Southey was the first man of letters who openly and boldly placed him *near* the eminence he at present occupies. We differed in this: Southey preferred him, thirty years ago, to Walter Scott; while my opinion was, that he had written nothing so good as *Marmion*. Again, I showed my sense of the injustice he had received in the first publication of my *Imaginary Conversations*. No person who can pretend to the name of critic had publicly avowed so favourable an opinion of him. It was only when I heard from Kenyon and Robinson of his base ingratitude to Southey, of his practice (for I heard it again from a gentleman and lady named Godwin, residing in his neighbourhood,) of saying that he would not give five shillings for all the poetry Southey had ever written, it was

only then that I resolved to show more accurately what were his own claims in comparison with Southey's.

There is little moral courage in our literary world. Few will speak what they think; and they gather what they think from conduits and common sewers rather than from springs and fountains. They do not guide the mass, but are moved along and soon confounded with it. In all other countries the literary part of the community is the best; in England, I am sorry to say, it is guided by spleen, fashion, and interest. You have suffered so much by pursuing another line of conduct

"Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre errare,"

that I may speak frankly and fearlessly to you on this subject.

I doubt whether the leaves I send you have not somewhat too much of the south wind among them—if so, lay them aside. Perhaps, if ever a volume should be formed of these papers, there are fewer which you would be inclined to exclude. Let Mrs. —— see them as soon as you can. She has expressed the wish.—Believe me ever, my dear sir, yours sincerely,

W. S. Landor.

Amongst those who must have received interesting letters from Leigh Hunt was Thomas Noon Talfourd, afterwards one of the Justices of the Court of Common Pleas; but it would appear that no such letters remain in existence. The character of the correspondence may be seen by a couple of notes from Talfourd:—

Gloucester, 10th August, 1836.

My dear Hunt,—Your *ubs* of the *New Monthly Magazine*, which I shall prize exceedingly, has not reached me; but I yesterday obtained another at Monmouth, which apprised me of a great obligation to your kindess. Heartily do I wish you had a better subject; for, hardened lawyer as I am, I find myself blushing to read these noble lines, and to

consider them as intended for me. I shall enjoy making the corrections, which I quite understand and appreciate, and luxuriate in making over and over again the sonnets, and in trying to fancy that I am not wholly undeserving of them. How happy am I to recognize the hopefulness of your strain, as to poetry, like the coming on of a second spring! And how happy shall I be if I can contribute to set at rest that heart which so expands to kindness and to beauty!—Believe me, ever faithfully yours,

T. N. TALFOURD.

Wardie, near Edinburgh,
20th September, 1836.

MY DEAR HUNT,—The *Examiner*, containing your promised article on revisiting the Haymarket, has only just reached me on my return to this place from a little tour in the Highlands. I need not assure you that it has given me exquisite pleasure—not so much as administering to my vanity as an author, or as heightening the reputation of a poem which has succeeded far beyond its merits and my hopes, but as associating some of your profoundest feelings with my attempt to embody in human and individual shape that spirit of self-sacrifice which has so influenced your life in its glory and its sorrows. Lord Jeffrey retains a most vivid desire to assist our common object of alleviating some of the worldly consequence of that spirit in your case, but I am afraid his personal efforts have already exhausted his own immediate circle of friends. I have only seen Wilson for a few minutes, when he apologized to me for having omitted to answer my letter to him on the subject; but I am to dine with him on Saturday, and do not doubt that before we part (which I dare say will not be till long after the chimes at midnight) I shall have his cordial acquiescence and promise of aid.—Believe me, my dear Hunt, ever most truly yours,

T. N. TALFOURD.

This friendship continued through life unimpaired, strengthened by questions which might have shaken

other friendships, but which only tested the true insight and genuine good heart of the lawyer.

I have been equally disappointed in getting letters addressed to Mr. Thomas Carlyle. Search has been made for them amongst stores of papers put by, but they have not been found. It was on the 8th February, 1832, that the writer of the essays named *Characteristics* received, apparently from Mr. Leigh Hunt, a volume entitled *Christianism*, for which he begged to express his thanks. By the 20th of February, Carlyle, then lodging in London, was inviting Leigh Hunt to tea, as the means of their first meeting; and by the 20th November, Carlyle wrote from Dumfries, urging Leigh Hunt to "come hither and see us when you want to rusticate a month. Is that for ever impossible?" The philosopher afterwards came to live in the next street to his correspondent, in Chelsea, and proved to be one of Leigh Hunt's kindest, most faithful, and most considerate friends. Many of his letters do I find amid the stores; but, as I have said, an earnest search for the answers has failed.

FROM EGERTON WEBBE.

20th April, 1837.

DEAR HUNT,—Holmes was here last night, and we abused you in emulous alternations like the swains of Theocritus, but with no goatherd to adjudicate the palm, and the theme taken was your running across the streets and reading *Arabian Nights*, with sundry other admired youthfulnesses, in conjunction with the "*elderly behaviour*" of stopping ever in, and stepping never out, and pleading all sorts of unyouthful, and therefore inadmissible, excuses. But Holmes's bucolicisms were, I confess I think, quite unwarrantable, for he too has been segregating in an abominable degree of late on the ground of a splenetic attack! nor had I seen him for an

immense time till last night, when I read him some beautiful poetry, having reference to his defection, incidentally to other matters affecting *your* reputation. So finding himself libelled in your company, he insisted I should subject myself to your action as well as his, by sending you the false and malicious matter. The fact is, that that evening, when you should have met him here and came not, *he* did not come a bit more than yourself! being also, it seems, overtaken with a strong domestic attachment on that occasion;* and, consequently, I was abandoned to my own reflections, and being always a man of a ponderous, melancholic habit, gave way to a vehement despair, which, after bubbling awhile in incoherent semi-suppressions, presently boiled over in dactylics. In fact, instead of "mourning in silence" after the receipt of Queen Dido when "Æneas would not come," I came out with the *enclosed croak*, which I would not send, however, till Holmes encouraged me to annoy you. I should say, that the report, current at that time, of your continually repairing to the house of a particular enemy in Soho Square, without ever being able to clear the intermediate stone's-throw, afforded me *gall* that embittered the effusion.

I have had a long dose of disgust, in the form of inflammatory cold. I hope you have contrived to exclude the enemy so far? How much *farther* winter means to go it is difficult to predicate, but one must endeavour to believe in a sun. Believe me, dear Hunt, ever faithfully yours,

EGERTON WEBBE.

P.S.—Holmes is fully bent on the *Poplar* expedition, and hopes presently to win you to some arrangement about it.

35, *Warwick Street, Regent Street,*
14*th July*, 1837.

DEAR HUNT,—The *Essay on Truth* (enclosed) will make, I suppose, about seven pages, the *Cupid and Psyche* verses

* I ought to say, though, that he has been very poorly.

about two; so I hope to be the reducer of your responsibilities as purveyor general by about nine pages. I should like the verses to go in this month, because of the pleasure which I know I shall thereby be the means of affording to two friendly souls of recent union, to whom such a memento of my regard is also due from me for countless kindnesses, making this therefore the more agreeable payment. And also behold! because I can sell you thereby some half-dozen copies of the Mag (a mighty matter!) You shall have another Latin epigram for the month after next, and whatever other "Balaam" it shall please God to inspire, perchance some classical reveries and other profundities. At all events, you will be sure I shall any time this ten years be doing my possible, and any given failure will arise simply from that overwhelming necessity to "*comparare rem*," which presses me for ever against my will to join in that stupid steeple-chase, or rather say, *damnable donkey-ride*, after the things of this world, that makes such fools of us all and breaks so many necks deservedly. Yet, if you catch me on this turf, remember that I, poor jockey, don't run for myself altogether, but *others* want the stake whose running days are over.

As to "*given* failures," I am sure they will be *forgiven* failures on your part, if any take place, which will not be if there is virtue in goodwill and solvency in a debtor's just resolutions. In *one* sense at least, love never stops payment,—which, though it sounds like a sophistry to evade the law, will be too easy to your understanding to need further commentary from one not often so garrulous.

A dear sister of mine, by name Fanny, has come to town on a visit to a friend to endeavour to recruit her strength, which has been dreadfully impaired by and since the great family shock. . . . .

Dear Hunt, I return to my letter a murdered individual, having been called from the above to undergo an execution under the hands of six ruffianly bloodsuckers called leeches, for I am sorry to say I have been laid up here the three last days with my enemy the bile, and have been physicking and

bleeding most generously. Said leeches have been three hours at it, and I am ordered to bed as the only fit place.

I must say I have found many things more pleasant than dabbling all a summer's evening in one's own lifeblood—stooping over a basin like a stuck pig, and everywhere "making slops," like naughty children—only out of one's own good veins! If I go on much longer I shall be staining this sheet, for I feel I am still in the "*bloody blameful*" way.

I meant to say above that my dear sister and I mean to come arm-in-arm some evening to see you—if so be as you are agreeable to same; since I need not say she has a proper earnestness about seeing one she has so long respected at a distance. Poor dear! she has suffered so acutely from the corrosiveness of solitary life operating on her sensibilities, that I should say she hardly bears any allusion to a certain subject—the one always before her. I have owed *my* salvation to the business of this scene and life leaving no moments for reflection. To a similar change I look for *hers*. If we come, and you should talk to her, your strain of remark would do her good, I know, as it has always her brother, but please eschew the name of the grief, and perhaps Mrs. Hunt would be equally kind.

But I bleed, and here comes a regular river! So farewell, with a thousand &cs., and believe me ever your devoted friend,

EGERTON WEBBE.

No. 1, *Sherrard Street, Golden Square, nearly opposite the bottom of the Quadrant.*—[Better than ever for omnibuses, &c., for catching you when you come to Reynell's.] *5th October*, 1837.

DEAR HUNT,—I only got your kind note and Magazines to-day, having made new settlement (see immense date), and Fanny, who has been all alone at Queen Square, not being able to send on sooner.

I have been passing a fortnight with Holmes at Islington, and we perpetually were thinking of our dear antipodes, and execrating the inhumanity of space and distance, particularly on three very *Elm-tree* days, which, but that they came wilfully and in a manner not to be counted upon, might well have encouraged us to convey through her Majesty's twopenny post certain sentiments of a friendly desire to meet certain faces under said elms, and to enjoy certain ale with said faces, and certain fun with said ale. But the bright-eyed days came and went, and no other eyes were bright with gladness but theirs, for wishes and "would that's" were all our resource, and Holmes was busy, and E. W. was busy; and so another summer is gone for aye, and has left pleasure, as usual, a bankrupt and odious *business* in the ascendant. How I *hate* work! and how I hate with a deep hate the stupid necessity (ever *self*-imposed—in fact, a really *un*necessary necessity) of poking over jobs, and putting off joys, and so missing the tide, and blundering on towards old age with both eyes out, and never sitting down and saying, "Now's the time for pleasure!" I swear I think I am old—very old—hollow and hoar, and past bearing of joys, and, somehow, in the right road for missing everything pleasant. Summer, I find, has just three days of sunshine for the rallying of friends and renewal of field associations, and these always gallop past one or catch one in the middle of an imposed task, and seem to vanish with a smile of contempt thrown back at one's practical incapability to be happy. I begin to think idleness your only true philosophy. Certainly to place pleasure in *work* may be a fine point of discipline, but a miserable delusion as regards the enjoyment of life. Friends—that one never meets; flowers—one never smells; peaches—that one never tastes;—what are these but shadows and chimeras? Books are good things; but a curse on books that banish *things* and give us ideas for facts. So far am I a *materialist* that I wish to live bodily amongst my friends, and to inhabit the world *really*. I often feel like a *shadow* threading these streets so abstractedly and silently, and ever

at one side of reality. But enough of what I hope is genuine nonsense, and shall find to be so to-morrow.

When will you come and take tea with me in my new apartment—first floor—very genteel—chimney-piece ornaments—sofa and fire-screen! Do come and praise my greatness, and if it is only to see how bonnily my books all just fit into a snug little bookcase, in a snug little bedroom, and what a devil of a table I have got! N.B.—A pianoforte and a sister to hire,—"attends parties." I have left no room to expatiate on Magazine pleasures, and, alas! Magazine *pains*.

I shall begin duly to love A. M. D., and any other bland initial you may recommend to my alphabetical regard. How I have been employed I hope you will give me an early opportunity of telling you. I want particularly to consult you in a matter of feeling, of taste, and of classical selectness; three points whereof I gladly appoint you arbiter—knowing none to approach your dread critical majesty therein.

In haste, and without a half delivery of my whole mind, believe me ever yours faithfully, &c. &c.,

EGERTON WEBBE.

1, *Sherrard Street*, 22*nd October*, 1837.

DEAR HUNT,—Holmesius et ego ibamus per Cheapsidam, when there came nobis obviam Mrs. H., bad news de te tellitura, et nostros breastes hinc vel maxime agonizatura, communicationibus suis most objectionabilibus. Both of nos eo ipso momento de te speakabamus, et immediately fuimus inspirati with a great desire payere tibi nostros respectos, et endeavourare cheerere te with confabulationibus and spirited remarks nostris. Sed alas! Holmesius in Poplarem, ego in lectum meum, causâ indispositionis, respectively were compulsi to reparare. Me mea indispositio et bloody-minded cupper etiam nunc detinet, et in sofa adhuc hæreo stickoque unpleasantissime. Interea opera prologomenaque operæ, cujus nothing at all scriptum est, yet worth loquendi about, et præterea alia infinita hujusmodi and aliusmodi negotia

Herculeanea Atlanteanaque brainum meum well nigh turnitura, et omnia in hunc ipsum weekum compressenda crammandaque vocant, postulant, arcessunt. Sed liceat sperare that, after the turn of the new mensis, we may meet you, Holmesius and ego, et habeamus a quiet evening simul, vel hic, vel apud te, vel alio quolibet loco.

Will you, si placet, examine the enclosatum, et videre num existimes *faciet* (it will *do*) for the *Repositorium?* Est unus articulorum jampridem in Calcuttam missorum, et hoc explanatum est in parvâ notâ ad bottommum paginæ. Est seriosus articulus, sed bonus (ut quidem arbitror!) et insertio ejus obligabit humilem ejus authorem. De eodem fonte alii sunt parati ad manandum, or percomical, or de tragical, si Parcæ *parcant*, et amicus editor probet.—Et sum tuus fideliter

EGERTONUS WEBBEIUS.

1, *Sherrard Street*, 1*st January*, 1838.

DEAR HUNT,—I have been longing to see you, to talk about everything and some other things, and am really coming to call on you soon. I go out now, and am "quite a man."

I write to ask you whether you could, by any magnanimous conquest of impossibility, conjoin your most desiderated self to Holmes and your memorialist, in a trip to Enfield, for air and change, that comes off on Wednesday, the 3rd instant. We go by coach at ten o'clock morning; or we could, if desirable, go to Edmonton a little later in the day, and walk thence an easy mile or two through meadows to Enfield. We have an intention of putting up at a rustic inn, whereof Holmes is cognizant from former experience of its perfections; and we propose doing, or not doing, any given things that may, or may not, occur to us to do, or not to do. In fact, "*liberty*" is the watchword. Proposed duration of rustication, two days. Expenses not estimated Joe-Humically, but warranted moderate, whereof excellent assurance lieth in the fact that both present parties to the jaunt are by natural consti-

tution and a certain heavenly ordainment incapable of extensive disbursements.

We put our papers in our pockets, and contemplate a judicious tempering of raptures with business.

An early answer will oblige, yours respectfully, for Holmes, Webbe and Co.,

EGERTON WEBBE.

P.S.—If I see you not, nor hear, accept all the cordial, heart-emanating, profound wishes for a happy year to come. These wishes ought not to extend to *all time*, as that would seem to render the repetition of them at the end of each year superfluous.

Beak Street, 17*th April*, 1838.

DEAR HUNT,—All hail the dramatic muse! Your note gave me infinite pleasure from its good spirits, and I stood in need of some token of the sort after reading your somewhat uncomfortable valediction in the *Repository* (may you now *Repose-a-radical!*) Fox sent me lately the two last numbers, neither of which I had seen, and I had been enjoying your *Panegyric of Little People*, some of the verses of which I think inimitably good, especially the first and ninth, and then Lady Winchelsea (who, whether she would have *won-Chelsea* or no, would have won, it seems, one of its inhabitants, had she lived now), with "those windings and that shade," a most charming little poem, with the sweetest of cadences.

It is a 1,000,000 pities that the Magazine should decease. God and Fox knows why it should not have gone on, and thriven.

"The play's the thing!" I don't know why, but I can hardly conceive you submitting to the restraint of the dramatic forms; and, again, you have for the most part breathed so rare an atmosphere of thought—one so unlike the denser element of the playhouse, that, at first glance, I should almost fear your running too fine and subtle a line for the capacity of playgoing folks. It will hardly do, I fear, to give the town

the food that would nourish them best. "*Si bona nôrint*," and if public taste is ever destined to undergo a change that would render the finer parts of poetry and sentiment appreciable on the stage, it will be seen in another age, not in this. Bulwer's play seems to me to have succeeded by sheer dint of its dramatic appliances—its *telling situations*, &c. Your announcement has delighted me, and your rapid advancement not a little surprised me. How I envy you that wondrous resiliency of spirits and *ever-greenery* of mind.

The possible *cohabitation* of the C. G. boards! I long to see my piece so married.

IV. *Februarii* MDCCCXL.

Hæc quòd te litera apud theatrum petit, vult se non nimium patere.

Quid repetam inimicitias, invidiam? Est novorum hominum religiosa reluctatio. Sunt quibus bonam musicam in alienum quoddam et injucundum, si possint, juvat torquere.

Hoc tantùm cupio tibi in mentem revocare de opusculo—tui solius gratiâ comparatum—mihi ægrotanti adhuc, audiendi, dirigendi, facultatem non esse—te, ut in tali amico fuit, dixisse meam musicam quasi tuam ipsius facturum fore, ita ut siquis pravè aliquid inter canendum concipiat, eum posses corrigere, non aliter quàm si adstarem ipse, et in veram viam reportare—opus sic exigendum, auspice te, secundùm tempus, secundùm naturam, secundum mentem auctoris—omnes denique quotquot fuerint inimicos aut stultos talibus terrendos modis, abigendos, sparsendos, pessimdandos!

Te igitur cùm nitatur opusculum, esto ei quasi pater alter, quo fiat ut gratum filiolum invenies.

Accipe infrà quæ nobis confecit carmina monachus ille:—

"Nunc plorantes quòd amantes
Nunc gaudentes quòd scientes
Melius angelos amare,
Cæci sic venimus.

Deus, te querentes.
Tristi angulo O telluris
Vires tu suppeditare
Amatissimam daturis."

Vale!

At Mrs. Oram's, North End, Croydon.

DEAR HUNT,—Henceforth please to direct to Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. Oram's; but don't, in any lapse of mind, mistake, and say, *e. g.* Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. *O'Ram's* (because she's not Irish); nor Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. *Horum's* (because that's "*Jenny's case*"); nor Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. *Orabo's* (because, though it is true that *Oram* is bad Latin, yet it may be very good English); nor Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. Oh!—— ; nor Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. *Di-Orama's* (because her name is not Diana); nor Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. *Sweet Marjoram's* (because, though a "sweet" lady, her name is not "Margaret," and even if it were, that would not be the way to spell it; but it would be Mrs. *Mary Oram*); nor Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. OR-*am*—AND-*am*, &c.; nor Egerton Webbe, at Mrs. Necnon Æneas ut primum contigit Oram; nor any other *lapsuous* thing in short, but be guided by the address at the head of this note, which was only written to say that,—(1) I am here. (2.) Vincent is *not* here. But (3) I hope Vincent *will* be here—as soon as ever it suits his own pleasure and convenience. There are good beds to be had close by, which the Orama can recommend to me as if they were her own. He has, therefore, only to *come*, and I trust I shall make him, in all respects, comfortable and happy. At least, I will try.

I assure you, the effect of the change of air on me was, the very first day I came (yesterday), wonderful. Having for the two or three previous days lain unusually sick and ill in town, I came down here, and with infinite promptitude eat a fowl with Williams, limb for limb. I suffer very acutely in various ways, and am full of wrongs; but *Hope* has at length become reasonable.—Your's ever,

E. WEBBE.

P.S.—Come and see me.

P.S.—You are known here. I only sent out for a bottle of ink, and straightway a Mr. Weller! (any relation of Samivell?) claims me, through you, and will be so happy to call, if it is agreeable. I answer mellifluous; yet not a little wondering how *my* name should also be known to Mr. Weller as your friend; but Rumour is a tortuous creature.

FROM JOHN HUNT.

Red Hill, near Exeter, Wednesday.

MY DEAR LEIGH,—. . . . I knew Lord Durham when he was Mr. Lambton, and I was invited by Mr. Brougham to superintend the publication of the *Guardian* daily evening newspaper, to which Mr. L. was a large subscriber, and the only one of eighteen or twenty noblemen and gentlemen (Mr. B. excepted) who punctually fulfilled his engagements. The consequence of this neglect of the subscribers was, that the paper, though in a very promising state, was given up for lack of friends. While thus engaged, I heard of many kind acts performed by Lord D. and frequently observed his name in lists of subscribers to various useful and benevolent objects. You may recollect better than I do his conduct to Sir R. Wilson, when the latter was dismissed from the military service for attending the funeral of the poor Queen Caroline. I do not even remember the amount he subscribed for Sir Robert on that occasion, but the thing made a noise at the time. After my imprisonment by the Boroughmongers under Lord Castlereagh's reign of terror, Lord D. acted the part of the Good Samaritan in binding up my wounds and helping me on my way. When he took office under the Whigs, he offered me a place under Government, which, however, I declined accepting; and subsequently he obtained for my poor lost son Leigh an appointment in Barbados. For these continued acts of kindness you will not, I am sure, wonder that I feel myself bound to Lord D. by the strong ties of affection and

gratitude. . . .—Ever, dear Leigh, your affectionate brother,

JOHN HUNT.

FROM ROBERT HAYDON.

Bath, 10th February, 1840.

MY DEAR HUNT,—I wrote you a hurried note before going to bed, which I fear was hardly intelligible; but I write you again, to reiterate with more force all I first felt. Your play haunted me ever since, and I'll take my whole family to see it as soon as I return. As to obloquy, laugh at it. There were touches in your play Shakspeare could not excel. Now be cautious of your second, you know the dear world will be amazingly delighted to say your second is not equal to your first—therefore give on *two suits*. I am convinced your humour is equal to your power of pathos. Try that next.

After all, "there is a soul of goodness in things evil;" *all* you have suffered will fit your genius for the drama—stick to it—follow it up.

How singularly odd that we should meet in that way. I did not know you had a play rehearsing. I had been musing on my own life, and you had been in my mind for a day or two. I had written, he was a man who would have died at the stake for a principle, though he might have cried out like a child from physical pain, and would have screamed still louder if he put his foot in the gutter! Yet not one iota of recantation would have quivered on his lips, if all the elysium of all the religions on earth had been offered and realized to induce him to do so. I suppose we shall meet again at some other epoch. Till then success to you. Devote yourself to the drama.—Your affectionate friend,

R. HAYDON.

TO MRS. PLANCHÉ.

Chelsea, 13th February, 1840.

DEAR BATTY (for as you have consented to accept the name, I shall continue to rhyme you and yours together after

the social Oriental fashion).—Many thanks for your most kind letter, which I should have answered immediately but that I have received so many letters I did not know which to answer first; so you must forgive my seeming inattention (most attentive in heart and memory) by reason of the happy delirium into which you have thus conspired with others to throw me. I get news of you from time to time, of the recovery of Matty, and the happy non-necessity-for-recovery of Katty; though I do not hear such good news of yourself and your ultra-womanly nerves, which may Heaven bless and strengthen. Meantime I am able to congratulate *you* upon the success of your husband's *Masque*, in which he has made all the prominent parts of English history leap with such brief force and sufficiency out of the canvas, and give us victorious knocks on the head—a happy thought, and capitally well seconded by the scene-painter and machinist. There is a dance in it one could dance for ever, and a hay-making village scene with an embowered church-spire fit to live and die in, especially for honeymoons.—Your obliged and sincere friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

END OF VOL. I.

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